THE True CHRISTIANS Love OF THE UNSEEN CHRIST:

OR A

DISCOURSE chiefly tending to excite and promote the decaying Love of Christ in the Hearts of Christians.

With an APPENDIX concerning Christs Manifestation of himself to them that love him.

1 Cor. XVI. 22.

If any man Love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

By THOMAS VINCENT, *Minister sometime of* Maudlins Milk-street, *London.*

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To the READER.

OUR *Saviour ſent an Epiſtle from Heaven to the Church of* Epheſus, *wherein he reproveth her becauſe ſhe had left her firſt love, and threatneth the removal of her Candleſtick, that he would take away her Light, if ſhe did not recover her Love. By the ſame hand at the ſame time he ſent another Epiſtle to the Church of* Laodicea, *wherein he reproveth her Lukewarmneſs, and threatneth becauſe ſhe was neither hot nor cold, he would ſpue her out of his mouth,* Rev. 2. 4. 5. & 3. 15, 16. *And are Chriſtians in* England *under no ſuch ſin, in no ſuch danger? when ſome ſcoff at the flames of love to Chriſt, like dogs that bark at the Moon ſo far above them; when the moſt nominal Chriſtians are wholly ſtrangers to this Love, whatever their notional knowledge be; the former looking upon it as but a fancy, the latter having it*

only in the Theory: and when amongst those Christians who love Christ in sincerity, there are so few that know what it is to Love Christ with fervour and ardency: when there is so General a decay of Loue to Christ in the Land, Lord what is like to become of England? *Have we not provoked the Lord to take away our Candlestick, to suffer the worse than* Egyptian *darkness to overspread us again, and cover our Light, because it shineth with such cold beams, because the Light of Knowledge in the head is accompanied with so little warmth of Love to Christ in the hearts of most Christians? every one will fetch water to quench fire in a general conflagration; and surely there is need in a day of such General decay of Love to Christ, that some should fetch fire, fire from Heaven, and use bellows too, Arguments I mean, to enkindle and blow up the spark of love to Christ, which seems so ready to expire.* Reader, *The following Discourse concerning the True Christians*

ſtians Love of the Unſeen Chriſt, is not finely ſpun, and curiouſly woven with neatneſſes of wit and language; it is not flouriſhed and ſet off with variety of Metaphors, Hyperbolies, Rhetorical Elegancies, or Poetical Fancies and Fragments; it is not adorned and fringed with the ſpecious ſhow of many Marginal Quotations excerpted out of divers Authors; the Diſcourſe is plain, but the Author hath endeavoured that it might be warm, his deſign being more to advance his Maſter than himſelf in thy eſteem; and if he have leſs of thy praiſe, ſo his Lord may have more of thy love, his great end is attained. The chief part of this Diſcourſe concerning the Love of Chriſt, is Application, and about two thirds of it Exhortation, (there being generally in this knowing Age more need of excitation than information,) where thou haſt variety of Arguments and motives to ſtir up and provoke unto the love of Chriſt, together with divers directions how to attain this love in the truth and ſtrength of it, and where-

in the ſtrength of love to Chriſt ſhould evidence it ſelf. There is alſo an Appendix added, for further encouragement unto the love of Chriſt, concerning Chriſts manifeſtation of himſelf unto ſuch as love him. The whole Diſcourſe is practical, nothing in it controverſal; not only Proteſtants, but Papiſts too will verbally acknowledge the obligation which Chriſtians have to love Chriſt, and none will oppoſe this that are true Chriſtians, none but Turks, Infidels and Devils are profeſſedly againſt it. That this little Book may be bleſſed by the Lord, to be a means to warm and inflame thine heart with love to the unſeen Chriſt, is the earneſt Prayer of

A hearty Well-wiſher to thy Soul,

Thomas Vincent.

THE

THE TRUE CHRISTIANS Love of the UNSEEN CHRIST.

1 PET. I. 8.

Whom having not ſeen, ye Love, in whom, though now ye ſee him not, yet Believing, ye Rejoyce with Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory.

THE Life of Chriſtianity doth conſiſt very much in our love unto Chriſt. Without Love unto Chriſt, we are as much without Spiritual Life, as a Carkaſs when the Soul is fled from it, is without Natural Life. Faith without love to Chriſt, is a dead Faith; and a Chriſtian without Love to Chriſt, is a dead

Christian; dead in Sins and Treſpaſſes. Without Love to Chriſt, we may have the Name of Chriſtians, but we are wholly without the Nature: we may have the Form of Godlineſs, but are wholly without the Power. *Give me thine heart*, is the language of God to all the Children of Men, *Prov.* 23. 26. And *give me thy Love*, is the language of Chriſt unto all his Diſciples.

Chriſt knoweth the command and influence which Love to him, in the Truth and Strength of it, hath: How it will engage all the other Affections of his Diſciples for Him; that if he have their Love, their Deſires will be chiefly after Him; their Delights will be chiefly in Him, their Hopes and Expections will be chiefly from Him; their Hatred, Fear, Grief, Anger, will be carried forth chiefly unto Sin, as it is Offenſive unto Him. He knows that Love will engage and employ for him all the Powers and Faculties of their Souls; their Thoughts will be brought into Captivity and Obedience unto Him; their Underſtandings will be employed in ſeeking and finding out his Truths; their Memories will be Receptacles to retain them; their Conſcience will be ready to accuſe and excuſe as his Faithful Deputies; their Wills will chooſe and refuſe according to his Direction

ction and Revealed Pleasure. All their Senses and the Members of their Bodies, will be his Servants: their eyes will see for him, their Ears will hear for him, their Tongues will speak for him, their hands will work for him, their feet will walk for him: All their Gifts and Talents will be at his devotion and service. If he have their Love, they will be ready to do for him what he requireth; they will be ready to suffer for him, whatever he calleth them unto: If they have much Love to him, they will not think much of denying themselves; taking up his Cross and following him wherever he leadeth them; love to Christ then being so Essential unto true Christianity, so earnestly look'd for by our Lord and Master, so powerfully Commanding in the Soul and over the whole Man, so greatly influential on Duty; I have made choice of this subject of *Love to Christ*, to treat on; and my chief Endeavour herein shall be to excite and provoke Christians unto the lively and vigorous Exercise of this Grace of Love unto the Lord Jesus Christ; of which Incentives, there is a great and universal need.

The Epistle wherein my Text lyeth, was written by *Peter* the Apostle of the Circumcision, and is directed to the Strangers scattered throughout *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*

docia, *Asia* and *Bithynia*, as in the first *vers.* of this Chapter. By these Strangers we are to understand the scattered *Jews*, who were Strangers in these several Countries where they did inhabit. We read in the 2*d* of the *Acts* that there came up many of these *Jews*, from these and other Countries, unto *Jerusalem* to Worship, and in the Temple hearing the Apostles speak with divers Tongues, which were of use in the divers places where they did live, and that without Instruction from Man, but as the Spirit gave them utterance; they were amazed and confounded: and afterward hearing *Peter* preach, through the wonderful Power of the Spirit, three thousand of them were Converted by one Sermon unto the Christian Faith, and added to the Christian Church. When the Feast of Pentecost was over, these Converted *Jews* returned into their Countries, where their several Dwellings, Families and Callings were: which Countries being Heathenish and Idolatrous, no doubt but there they met with Opposition and Suffering upon the account of the Christian Religion, which they became zealous Professors of, besides what they endured from their own Countrey-men, or Unconverted *Jews*, who hated Christianity more than the Heathens did. The Apostle doth

doth ſeem to have a reſpect unto theſe in this Epiſtle, wherein he doth encourage them under their ſufferings for the ſake of Chriſt, by many conſolatory Arguments. In the 2^d *v.* he wiſheth that Grace and Peace might be multiplyed in them and towards them, and then though their Sufferings did abound, their Conſolations would abound much more. In the 3^d, 4th and 5th *ver.* he bleſſeth God for his abundant Mercy towards them, in begetting them unto a lively Hope of the glorious and never fading Heavenly Inheritance which was reſerved for them through Gods infinite Grace, and unto which they were reſerved and kept through Faith by Gods infinite power. In the 6th and 7th *verſes*, he telleth them, however they were in heavineſs through manifold Temptations, that is Afflictions, which are the Worlds left-hand Temptations; yet he giveth them to underſtand, that theſe afflictions they were but for a ſeaſon; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning; they were but needful to humble them, to purifie them, to crucifie them to the world, to make them conformable to their head the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that they were for the tryal of their faith, that the truth of it might appear both to themſelves and others, and that the worth of it might

might appear now much more precious than Gold when it is tryed in the Fire, which carrying them through their sufferings, might be found both to their own praise and their Masters honour, at the appearing of Jesus Christ: and then the Apostle doth take occasion in the text to speak of their Love which they did bear unto this Jesus Christ, and of that unspeakable and glorious joy, which doth result from believing in him, although they had no sight of him, which no trouble or affliction could overwhelm or hinder. *Whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of Glory.* Hence observe,

Doct. 1. *That it is the Property and duty of true Christians to Love Jesus Christ whom they have never seen,* Whom having not seen ye Love.

Doct. 2. *That true Christians do Believe in an unseen Christ.* In whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing.

Doct. 3. *That true Christians do or may rejoyce in Believing, with unspeakable and glorious joy.* In whom, though now ye see him not, yet Believing ye rejoyce with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.

Here are three great points to be treated of.

of. 1. Concerning the Love of Chriſtians unto Chriſt. 2. Concerning the Faith of Chriſtians in Chriſt. 3. Concerning the joy of Chriſtians in Believing. For the preſent I ſhall ſpeak only of the Love of Chriſtians unto Chriſt under the firſt Doctrine, the other two I may have opportunity to treat of afterwards.

SECTION I.

Doct. *THat it is the Property and Duty of true Chriſtians to love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whom they have never ſeen.*

In handling of this point, I ſhall ſpeak, 1. Concerning true Chriſtians, who do love Jeſus Chriſt. 2. Concerning Jeſus Chriſt whom they have never ſeen, the Object of their Love. 3. Concerning the Love which they bare unto this unſeen Chriſt. 4. Shew that it is the Property of true Chriſtians to Love Jeſus Chriſt whom they have never ſeen. 5. That it is their Duty to love him. 6. How they ought to love Him. 7. Why they do love Him, where I ſhall give the reaſons of the point. 8. Make ſome Uſe and Application.

1. Concerning true Chriſtians, whoſe property it is to love Jeſus Chriſt whom they have

have never seen, *whom having not seen ye love*; *ye love*, that is, ye who are true Christians, who are so in reality as well as profession; and of these true Christians that do love Christ, the Apostle doth give a description in the 2d *ver.* where he calls them, *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through Sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* True Christians are Elect acacording to the foreknowledge of God the Father, they are such whom God according to the Councel of his own will, according to his own purpose and grace, did choose from all Eternity to be a holy and peculiar people to himself, to glorifie him here on Earth, and that they might be glorified by him hereafter in heaven. And this election doth evidence it self in the Sanctification of the Spirit; true Christians are sanctified, being separated and set apart from the rest of the world, for Gods use and service: God hath sealed them for himself, and hereby distinguished them from all others, the Motto of which seal is this, *Holiness unto the Lord.* See a description of them in this respect, 2 *Tim.* 2. 21. *If any man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto Honour, sanctified and meet for the masters use, and prepared unto every good work:* they are purged

purged from the defilement of ſin, which doth pollute and diſhonour them, they are veſſels unto honour, like thoſe of Silver and Gold in a great houſe, which are adorned with Pearls and precious ſtones; they are adorned with all ſanctifying graces, which are of more worth than the richeſt Jewels; and hereby they are both beautiful in Gods eye, and they are made meet for Gods uſe, being hereby prepared and enabled unto every good work. This the Apoſtle prays for in the behalf of the *Theſſalonians*, 1 *Theſ.* 5.23. *And the very God of peace ſanctifie you wholly, and I pray God your whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* True Chriſtians are ſanctifyed wholly, in their whole man, though they be not ſanctified thorowly; they are ſanctified in every part, though they are not ſanctified in the higheſt degree. Their whole Spirit is ſanctified, that is, the higher faculties of the ſoul, namely the underſtanding and the will: their Underſtandings are enlightned by the Spirit unto a ſpiritual diſcerning both of good and evil, beyond what any natural man doth or can attain unto; their Wills are bowed, or rather rectified, and made ſtraight, being enclined unto God and his Law. Their Souls are ſanctified in the inferi-

feriour faculties, in all the affections belonging both to the concupiſcible and the irraſcible appetite; their liking affections of love, deſire, delight and hope, are towards God and Chriſt and things above; their diſliking affections of hatred, fear grief and anger are towards ſin. Their bodies alſo are ſanctified, being made members of Chriſt, and inſtruments of Righteouſneſs; their eyes, ears, tongues, hands, feet and every part, being devoted to God, and made uſe of for his glory: Thus true Chriſtians are ſanctified by the Spirit. And they are ſanctified unto obedience, the graces which are wrought by the Spirit in their hearts, do appear in the obedience of their lives; the courſe of their lives is a courſe of obedience unto the laws of Chriſt: they are ſanctified unto obedience, and they are ſanctified unto ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt: God hath ſet them apart to be ſprinkled with the blood of the immaculate Lamb, who takes away ſin, that they might be pardoned and ſaved; ſuch are true Chriſtians, who love Chriſt whom they have not ſeen.

SECTION II.

Secondly, CONcerning the object of true Chriſtians Love, and that is Jeſus Chriſt whom they have never ſeen.

This

This Jeſus Chriſt whom they love, is the Eternal Son of God, the ſecond Perſon in the glorious Trinity, who in time aſſumed our Humane Nature, cloathed himſelf with our mortal Fleſh, lived like a ſervant in a mean condition, died like a malefactor the curſed Death of the Croſs, and all for our ſakes, for our ſins, roſe again the third day for our Juſtification, aſcended up into heaven after forty days, and there is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of the Majeſty on high, to make interceſſion for us, and to make preparation there for our reception, into the glorious Manſions and Eternal Habitations, which are in the Fathers houſe. He is called *Jeſus* from the Hebrew word יְשׁוּעַ which ſignifieth *to ſave*, becauſe he *ſaveth his People from their ſins*, Mat. 1. 21. He is called Chriſt from the Greek word χρίω, which ſignifieth to anoint, he being anointed by the Eather with the Spirit and with Power, to be Mediator between God and Man, to be the great Prophet, and Prieſt, and King of the Church. This Jeſus Chriſt Chriſtians have not ſeen with the eye of ſenſe; indeed ſome Chriſtians in the primitive times, as the Apoſtles, who were of his family, and other diſciples who converſed with him frequently, did ſee Chriſt with the eye of ſenſe, but it was in his ſtate of

Humili-

Humiliation, when he was here upon the Earth, not in his state of Exaltation, now he is in Heaven; yet some have seen Christ after his Ascension, namely *Paul* at his conversion, and *Stephen* the Proto-martyr before he dyed; but none have had a perfect sight with bodily eyes of the Glory which is upon Christ's body, the lustre of which is so great that none can behold it in this state of weakness and imperfection, and live. But whatever sight some Christians have had formerly, no Christians now have a sight of Christ's Person; they have heard of him with the hearing of the Ear, but they have not seen him with the seeing of the Eye; they have seen Representations of Christ in the Sacrament, but they have never seen his Person that is represented; they have seen his Image upon their Fellow-Christians, but they have not seen the Original from whom this Image hath been drawn. Some Christians have been in *Judea*, and seen the place where the Lord lived; and at *Jerusalem* and seen the place where the Lord dyed; and visited the place of his Sepulchre, where the Lord for a time did lye: and they have seen the Mount whence the Lord Ascended; but no Christians now alive have been in *Jerusalem*, and on Mount *Sion*, which is above, to see where the Lord now is in his Glory.

Glory. It is this Jeſus Chriſt whom Chriſtians have not ſeen, that is the Object of their Love.

SECTION III.

Thirdly, CONcerning the Love which true Chriſtians do bear unto this unſeen Chriſt. Love is the going forth of the Heart unto the Object beloved; and the Love which true Chriſtians do bear unto Jeſus Chriſt, is a Grace wrought by the Spirit in their hearts, whereby upon diſcovery and believing Apprehenſions of Chriſts infinite Lovelineſs and Excellency, his matchleſs Love, Grace and Mercy; their Hearts do go forth toward him in earneſt deſires after Union to him, and Communion with him, wherein they take chief Complacency; and this accompanied with a yielding and dedication of themſelves unto his will and ſervice.

1. *The Love of Chriſtians unto Chriſt, is a Grace wrought in their Hearts by the Spirit.* It is a Flower moſt Sweet and Fragant, but there is no Seed of it in the Nature of any Man ſince the Fall, it is planted in the Soul by the Spirit of God. Love to Chriſt is a divine Spark, that comes down from above;

a fire which is kindled by the breath of the Lord, whose Essence is Love.

2. *The Ground of this Love to Christ, is the discovery and believing Apprehensions of Christs Lovelinesse and Love.* There must be first a discovery of Christ as a suitable Object for love, and not a bare Notion of this, but believing apprehensions of it, that Christ is infinitely lovely, superlatively excellent, and that his love is matchless and transcendent towards the Children of Men; that there is a Treasury in him, and a Storehouse of all Graces, and the most needful and rich Supplies; otherwise there will be no going forth of the Heart in love unto him.

3. *The Actings of Christians love to Christ, is in their desires after Union unto, and Communion with Christ.* It is the Nature of love to desire Union to the Object beloved; especially of this love to Christ: and this Union being attained, the desires are after Communion with Christ, Converse and Fellowship with him; no converse is so desirable as with the Persons whom we most dearly love: and this Communion being attained, there is chief Complacency therein, the Soul doth sweetly rest and repose it self in Christ, and rejoyceth in his presence and love.

4. *The Concomitant of this Love which*

true

true Chriſtians have unto Chriſt, is a yielding and dedication of themſelves unto his will and Service. Lovers do give themſelves unto thoſe whom they love; this accompanieth the Marriage Union; and ſuch as love Chriſt, they are eſpouſed and joyned unto Chriſt; and they give themſelves unto Chriſt, to be his, and wholly at his diſpoſe, as the Wife giveth her ſelf unto the diſpoſe of her Huſband.

SECTION IV.

Fourthly, THe Fourth thing is to ſhew, that it is the Property of all true Chriſtians to Love this unſeen Chriſt. True Chriſtians are differenced and diſtinguiſhed, not only from all Heathens and Infidels, but alſo from all bare Nominal Chriſtians, by their love to Jeſus Chriſt. It is the Property of Covetous Perſons to love worldly Wealth and Riches: It is the Property of ambitious Perſons to love worldly Honour and Dignities: It is the property of voluptuous Perſons to love ſenſual Pleaſures and Delights: And it is the Property of true Chriſtians to love Jeſus Chriſt whom they have never ſeen. None but ſuch as are true Chriſtians do Love Chriſt, and

all

all those that are true Christians do love him. The loveliness of Christ doth appear not to the Eye of Sense, but to the Eye of Faith; they that do not see him with this Eye, they cannot love him; and they that do see him with this Eye, they cannot choose but love him. Such as do not love Christ, it is not because Christ wants Beauty, but because they are blind. Now all true Christians have this Eye of Faith to discern Christ's Excellencies; and none but true Christians have this Eye; the Essence of Christianity doth consist in Believing: Reason makes us Men, but Faith makes us true Christians. It being therefore the property of true Christians to believe, it is their Property also to love this Unseen Christ.

SECTION V.

Fifthly, THe Fifth thing is to shew, that it is the Duty of all true Christians to love this unseen Christ; this will appear if you look into *John* 21.15,16,17. *Peter* was one of the boldest and forwardest of all Christs Disciples, but he had been withal too self-confident, which was the introduction unto, and laid the foundation for his fall and thrice shameful denial of his Master;

ſter; a look from his Lord put him in remembrance, and brought him to Repentance, with bitter weeping for his ſin ſo ſoon as it was committed. After our Saviour was riſen from the dead, he appears unto *Peter* with other of his Diſciples, and in this place he asketh the ſame queſtion in the ſame words three times, *Simon Son of Jonas, loveſt thou me?* Whereby as he doth tacitly upbraid him for his great ſin, in his three times denyal of him (which had there not been a defect in his love, he would never have done) ſo he doth alſo give a ſignification, that love to himſelf is the great duty, and the great thing which he doth look for in all his Diſciples.

SECTION VI.

Sixthly, THe Sixth thing is to ſhew, how Chriſtians ought to love this unſeen Chriſt.

1. Chriſtians ought to love Chriſt with Sincerity of Love; *Eph.6.24. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in Sincerity.* It was the great ſin of *Judah, Jer.* 3.10. that *ſhe turned not to the Lord with her whole heart, but feignedly*: ſo it is a great ſin to love Chriſt with a feigned and hypocritical

critical love; the love of Christians to Christ ought to be sincere, in regard of the habit and inward workings of it, they must love him not only in show, word, and outward profession, but their love must be cordial, in the heart, and so a love indeed and in truth: and the love of Christians to Christ must be sincere in regard of the object of it, they must love Christ for himself, and not chiefly for what they get by him; to love Christ only for Temporal gain, is hypocritical love; to love Christ chiefly for other gain, is not so spiritual, but to love Christ for his own excellencies and perfections, is most sincere and generous; this sincerity of love to Christ is every ones duty.

2. Christians ought to love Christ with Supremacy of love, they must place him in the highest seat of their hearts; he is a Great King, and he looks for the Throne, and that all Creatures should be placed beneath him, and stand at his Footstool: *Mat.* 10. 37. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me; he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* They are the words of our Saviour: Christians may love Father and Mother, the Law of God and Nature doth require it; they may love Husband and Wife, the Word of God enjoyneth

the Husband to love his Wife as his own Body, and as Christ loved the Church; they may love Sons, Daughters, Brethren, Sisters, Kindred, Friends, yea Enemies, and they ought to do it; yet all must be with a subordinate love, but they must love Christ with their chief love; otherwise they are not worthy to stand in the relation of Disciples.

3. Christians ought to love Christ with Ardency of Love: *Luke* 24. 32. *And they said one to another, Did not our Hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?* This burning love Christ enkindled in the hearts of his Disciples, and this burning love Christ requireth of all Christians; *Cant.* 8. 6, 7. *Love is strong as Death, the coals thereof are coals of Fire which hath a vehement Flame: Many waters cannot quench Love, neither can the Floods drown it.* Such a strong vehement ardent flaming love Christians should have unto Jesus Christ, which all the waters of Affliction may not be able to quench, which no Floods of temptations or Persecution may be able to drown and overwhelm. Therefore,

4. Christians ought to love Christ with Constancy of Love. Having begun to love him, they ought to continue to love him, and to love him unto the end; as they ought

to be constant in their Obedience, and to persevere in their other Graces; so they ought to be constant and to persevere in this Grace of love to Christ.

SECTION VII.

Seventhly, THe Seventh thing is to shew, why true Christians do love Christ, whom they have never seen.

Rea. 1. True Christians do love Christ because of the Need which they have of him. Men do love their necessary Food, without which their Bodies would starve with Hunger: Men do love their necessary Raiment and Habitations, without which in Winter Seasons their Bodies would starve with Cold. Men do love their necessary Friends, upon whom (under God) they have their Dependance, and from whom they have all their Subsistence: But no thing in the World, or Friend in the World, is so needful to the Body, as the Lord Jesus Christ is unto the Soul: and as the Excellencies of the Soul are far beyond the Excellencies of the Body, so the necessities of the Soul are far beyond the necessities of the Body: which necessities can be answered by none but Jesus Christ; and therefore true Christians

stians do love him. At first Conversion when they were convinced of Sin, awakened out of their carnal security, O what need had they, and did they see they had of Christ! they perceived themselves to be lost, and that it was Christ only that could save them; they felt the wounds of Conscience, and it was Christ only that could heal them; they feared the wrath of a sin-revenging God, and it was Christ only that could deliver them. The Remission, Reconciliation and Salvation, which they had by Christ, did lay the first Foundation of a most endeared love unto Christ; And still they perceive a continual need of Christ, to procure daily pardon for them, and to convey daily supplies of Grace unto them: They have need of Christ, when they are dark to enlighten them; when they are dead to quicken them; when they are streightned to enlarge them; when they are weak to strengthen them; when they are sad to comfort them; when they are tempted to succour them; when they are fallen to raise them; when they are in doubts to resolve them; when they are under fears to encourage them; when they stagger to establish them; when they wander to restore them. Christ, and none but Christ, can do all this, and more than this

for them: and therefore because of the need and usefulness of Christ, true Christians do love him.

Rea. 2. True Christians do love an unseen Christ, because of the Lovelineſs of Christ; which Lovelineſs though it be not and cannot here be seen by the eye of the Body, yet it is evident unto the eye of Faith: see the description which is given of Christ the Beloved, by his Spouse the Church, *Cant.* 5. 9. The Daughters of *Jeruſalem* there enquire of the love sick Spouse, *What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, O thou faireſt amongſt Women? what is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, that thou doſt ſo charge us?* Hereupon the Spouse giveth a description, *ver.* 10. *My Beloved is White and Ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand*; and after she had set forth his Graces, beauties, and excellent accompliſhments, in Metaphors taken from beauties in the several parts of mans body, in the 11, 12, 13, and 14 *verſes*, she concludeth in the 15, and 16 *verſes*, *His countenance is as* Lebanon, *excellent as the Cedars. His mouth is moſt ſweet, yea he is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O Daughters of Jeruſalem.* The Spouse is here acknowledged to be the faireſt amongſt Women, and not only by the Daughters of *Jeruſa-*

Jeruſalem, but her beloved, who had a more curious eye, doth both commend her lovelineſs, and admire it: *ch.* 6. 4, 5. *Thou art beautiful, O my Love, as Tirzah, comely as Jeruſalem: Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me*; and *ver.* 10. *Who is this that looketh forth as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners?* But what beauty is there then in the Beloved? if the Church be beautiful beyond all other of the Children of men, how beautiful is Jeſus Chriſt, from whom the Church doth derive all its comelineſs? He is ſaid to be *White and Ruddy*, that ſhews the beauty of his face; and his countenance is ſaid to be *as Lebanon, and like the lofty Cedars thereof*, that ſhews the Majeſty of his face. His *Mouth* is ſaid to be *moſt ſweet*; and ſweet it is indeed, in regard of the gracious words which proceed from it: no Doctrine ſo ſweet as Chriſt's Doctrine, no Precepts ſo ſweet as Chriſt's Precepts, no Promiſes ſo ſweet as Chriſts Promiſes. But to ſum up all excellencies and perfections in a word, he is ſaid to be *altogether Lovely*; there is no Perſon or Thing in the World that is moſt lovely, which can properly be called altogether lovely: Many defects may be found in the moſt amiable perſons, and

much insufficiency may be found in the most desirable things; but Christ is altogether lovely; unlovely in no respect, there being no spot or blemish, no defect or imperfection to be found in him: and he is lovely in every respect, there is an incomparable and transcendent amiableness in Christs person in every regard. In the person of Christ the humane nature and the divine nature are in Conjunction, he is most lovely in regard of both. His humane nature is compounded of Body and Soul. Hs Body is most beautiful, a most glorious beauty and lustre is put upon it: whatever it were in his state of humiliation, be sure it hath a glorious beauty now in his state of exaltation. It is called σῶμα τῆς δόξης, a glorious body, *Phil.* 3. 21. If the face of *Moses* did shine with resplendent Glory, after his conversing Forty dayes with God in Mount *Sinai* which was below; how doth the body of Christ shine, which hath been above Sixteen hundred years in Mount *Sion* which is above? I am perswaded that Christs Body is the most Beautiful of all Visible Creatures. But the beauty of Christs Soul doth excell: No creature whatever, hath such shining excellencies as are in the Soul of Christ; all the excellencies that are, or ever were in any creature, are like a Feather laid in the Ballance

lance with the exceeding weight of his glorious excellencies and perfections. Chriſt excelled the moſt excellent men that ever lived, as to Spiritnal Endowments, when he was here upon the Earth; He excelled *Moſes* in Meekneſs, *Solomon* in Wiſdom, *Job* in Patience; and how much doth he excell now he is in Heaven? he excelleth not only the Spirits of juſt men made Perfect, but alſo the moſt glorious and holy Angels that never ſinned: If any Creatures have Wiſdom, it is but a Beam, Chriſt is the Sun; If they have Goodneſs, it is but a drop, in Chriſt is the Ocean; If they have Holineſs, it is but a Spark or dark ſhadow, Chriſt is the Brightneſs of his Fathers Glory; If they have the Spirit, they have it but in ſome meaſure, the Spirit is given to Chriſt without Meaſure, *Joh.* 3. 34. Chriſt is moſt lovely in his Manhood, ſo nearly united unto his Godhead; and how lovely is he in his Godhead! as God, he is equal in all Glorious Excellencies with the Father. Chriſts Godhead implyeth excellency of Being, he calleth himſelf *I am*, Joh. 8. 28. Excellency of Glory, therefore called *The Lord of Glory*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. and *King of Glory*, Pſal. 24. 7. *Lift up your heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lift up, ye Everlaſting Doors, and the King of Glory ſhall come in.* This is Interpreted by

ſome, to be ſpoken of Chriſts Aſcenſion, and the Angels and Saints making way for his Triumphant Entrance, and Poſſeſſion of his Heavenly Palace. Many deſcriptions are given in the New Teſtament, of this lovely Perſon: I ſhall mention only one; *Col.* 1. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. *Who is the Image of the inviſible God, the Firſt-born of every creature for by him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, Viſible and Inviſible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or principalities, or Powers, all things were made by him and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt: And he is the Head of the Body, the Church; who is the beginning, the Firſt-born from the Dead, that in all things he might have the Preeminence: For it pleaſed the Father, that in him all fullneſs ſhould dwell.* If we read, believe and conſider this great Deſcription of Chriſt, we muſt needs ſee and ſay, that Chriſt is moſt Excellent and Amiable, and that no beloved is like to the Beloved of true Chriſtians; therefore it is that true Chriſtians do love Chriſt, becauſe of his lovelineſs.

Rea. 3. True Chriſtians do love Chriſt, becauſe of His love; His love which he doth bear to them: He loves them with a firſt love, and with a free love; he loves them with a tender and compaſſionate love, with an

an active or doing love, with a paſſive or ſuffering love; his love is Infinite without Bounds or Limits; it is Superlative without compariſon, Tranſcendent beyond comprehenſion, Everlaſting without change, and which will have no end or concluſion: He lov'd them when they were polluted in their ſins, and waſht them with his own blood; he loved them when they were Naked in their Souls, and cloathed them with the Robes of his Righteouſneſs; he loves them in their ſickneſs and ſorrows, and is their Comforter; he loves them in their wants and ſtraits, and is their Benefactor; he loves them in Life, and is the Life of their Souls; he loves them at Death, and is the Stay of their Hearts; and he loves them after Death, and will be their Portion for ever. There is great Reaſon that true Chriſtians ſhould love Chriſt, becauſe of his loveſineſs; and there is further reaſon that they ſhould love him, becauſe of his love, eſpecially when both are incomparable, both are incomprehenſible. I ſhall further ſpeak (God willing) unto both theſe with other reaſons, under the motives in the Exhortation to excite Chriſtians to the love of Chriſt.

SECTION VIII.

Use 1. FOR Information, hence learn, that there are but few true Christians in the world, because there are so few that love this *unseen Christ*: There are many Christians in Name, few Christians in deed and in truth. The time hath been when openly to profess the Name of a Christian, did argue true love unto Jesus Christ; I mean in the Primitive times, when Christians were Persecuted by the Heathens, as in the ten first dreadful Persecutions under the Heathen Emperours; when the world was watered with Christian blood, then especially at some times, and in some, yea, most places, whoever openly acknowledged themselves to be Christians, they exposed themselves unto Imprisonments, Racks, Tortures, Burnings, and the most cruel deaths; it was the Truth and Strength of Love unto Jesus Christ, which carried them thorow such great sufferings, as many did in those dayes undergo for the sake of Jesus Christ: But now there are Multitudes of bare nominal Christians, they call themselves Christians, being baptized in Christ's name, but they are altogether without love to Christ, whose name they bare:

bare: Surely there are but few, not only in the Chriſtian World, but even in *England* (where Chriſtianity is to be found in as great purity as in any place) that love Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity: No groſſely ignorant perſons do truely love Chriſt; ſuch as don't know Chriſt, they can't love him, *ignoti nulla cupido*, there is no deſire after, nor love unto an unknown thing; an unknown evil cannot be hated, and an unknown good cannot be loved. No groſſely Erroneous perſons, do truely love Chriſt; ſuch as do not receive Chriſt's Truths, they cannot love Chriſts Perſon, *Joh.* 14. 23. *If any man love me, he will keep my words:* The words of Chriſt do include, not only the words of his Precepts, but alſo the words of his Doctrine; Such as erre groſſely, I mean in the Fundamental Truths of Chriſtianity, they are no friends to Chriſt, but his Enemies, ſo far are they from true love unto him. No groſſely wicked perſons, do truly love Chriſt; ſuch as profane perſons, who Blaſpheme the name of God in their hideous Oaths; the love of Chriſt doth teach an holy Awe and Reverence of Gods Name, ſuch are Perſecutors of Gods People for Righteouſneſs ſake. How can they love the Head, that hate the Members? Chriſt accounteth himſelf to be Perſecuted, in the perſecution of his Members,

Act. 9. 4. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* and *v.* 5. *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:* And surely Persecutors of Christ do not love Christ; such are scoffers at Religion, who deride Holiness, and mock at the name of a Saint or Godly person, whereby they evidently shew their contempt of the Holiness of Christ, from whom the Saints derive all theirs; and how can they love Christ that do contemn him and his Image. No unrighteous persons do truely love Christ, whether they be so in regard of distributative justice; or in regard of commutative justice; whether they be unrighteous in Execution of judgment, in distribution of Rewards or Punishments, and whether they be unrighteous in their Traffick and Dealings; Christ strictly requireth Justice and Righteousness, and how can they love him, that do not keep this Commandement? No Covetous persons do truely love Christ, the Apostle saith, 1 *Joh.* 2. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him:* And I may say, that if any man love the world, (that is, with his chief love) the love of the Son is not in him; the love cannot be chiefly set upon things below here on Earth, and upon Christ who is above in Heaven: No Licentious persons do truly love Christ, no Drunkards, Adulterers, or

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any that indulge themſelves in unlawful delights; the love of Chriſt doth teach us to deny ſuch luſts, and to Mortifie them: No meer civil perſons that are unconverted, no Hypocrites that have a form of Godlineſs, but are without the power of it, do truely love Chriſt; the former may be loving and courteous unto men, but they have no love to Chriſt; the latter may profeſs love to Chriſt, and ſeem to love him, but they do not really love him. In a word, none who are under the reigning power of any ſin, do truly love Chriſt; the reign of ſin is in the heart, and this is inconſiſtent with the love of Chriſt in the heart. Now let us ſeperate all theſe forementioned perſons from the reſt; groſſely ignorant perſons, groſſely erroneous perſons, groſſely wicked perſons, the Profane, the Perſecutors of Gods People, the Scoffers at Religion, all Unrighteous perſons, all Covetous perſons, Drunkards, Adulterers, and all Licentious perſons, meer Civil perſons, Hypocrites, and all that are under the reigning power of ſin, and how few will there be left that do truly love Chriſt? and by conſequence there will appear but very few that are true Chriſtians.

SECTION

SECTION IX.

Use 2. FOR Examination. Here you may know whether you are true Christians, by the Tryal of your love unto Jesus Christ. Examine your selves therefore, whether you love Jesus Christ whom you have never seen; the most in the world do love truely those persons and things only which they have seen; but can you say that you sincerely and chiefly, do love Jesus Christ whom you have not seen? the love of the most doth arise from the notice which the Eye doth give of the Amiableness of the Objects beloved; but doth your love arise from the notice which the Ear hath given by the word, of the Amiableness which there is in Christ?

Qu. *How may we know whether we have true love to Jesus Christ?*

Ans. You may know the truth of your love to Jesus Christ, 1. By your desires after Christs presence. 2. By your prizing and frequenting those wayes wherein Christ is to be found, and seeking him therein. 3. By your love of Christs Image. 4. By your Obedience to Christs Commandements.

First, *By your desires after Christs presence*; wherever there is a great love to any person,

perſon, there is a deſire after the preſence of that perſon: do you ſincerely and earneſtly deſire Chriſts preſence? there is a two-fold preſence of Chriſt, His gracious preſence here, and his Glorious preſence at the laſt day.

1. There is Chriſt's Gracious preſence here, *Joh.* 14. 18. *I will not leave you comfortleſs, I will come unto you.* You deſire that ſuch Friends and Relations would come unto you, but do you deſire chiefly that Chriſt would come unto you? Chriſt cometh to his Diſciples in a way of gracious Communication, in a way of Gracious Maniſeſtation, and in a way of ſweet Conſolation which doth reſult from both.

1. Do you deſire that Chriſt would come unto you in a way of gracious communication? are your deſires after communication of ſpiritual light from Chriſt to teach and guide you; of ſpiritual Life from Chriſt to quicken and encourage you, of ſpiritual Strength from Chriſt, to ſupport you under burdens, and enable you unto Duties? do you earneſtly deſire communications of all kinds, and further degrees of grace out of that fulneſs of Grace which is in Chriſt? do you Hunger and Thirſt after Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, not only that it may be imputed to you for your Juſtification, but alſo

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that it may be more and more imparted unto you for your further Sanctification, that you might be brought and hereby wrought into a more perfect conformity and likeneſs unto Jeſus Chriſt: this is an evidence of true love.

2. Do you deſire that Chriſt would come unto you in a way of Gracious Manifeſtation? *Joh.* 14. 21. *He that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt my ſelf unto him.* Do you earneſtly deſire the fulfilling of this promiſe? that Chriſt would diſcover to you more of the lovelineſs of his perſon, and of the love of his heart? are you grieved when your beloved doth withdraw himſelf? when the curtain is drawn, and a cloud doth interpoſe between you and this Sun of Righteouſneſs; when he hideth and veileth his face from you? and do you long after Chriſts returns, and the Diſcoveries of himſelf unto you? *Come Lord Jeſus, Come quickly; Be as a Roe or young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices; Leap over the Mountains, and skip over the Hills, and make haſte unto my Soul, which is ſick of Love for thee in thy Abſence from me: O that I might ſee thy Face which is ſo Fair! that I might hear thy Voice which is ſo ſweet! that I might feel thy preſence which is ſo refreſhing! O that I might behold*

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thy Heart-raviſhing ſmiles! Say Lord that I am thine, and thou art mine; that thou haſt loved me, and given thy ſelf for me; that thy love to me was from Everlaſting, and that it is Unchangeable. Are theſe or ſuch like the breathings of your Souls? Such are the breathings of love to Chriſt.

3. Do you deſire that Chriſt would come unto you in a way of ſweet conſolation, which doth reſult from this communication and manifeſtation? are you deſirous after the Oyl of gladneſs, which Chriſt is Anointed withal? that he would give you of the Unction of the Spirit, not only to Sanctifie you, but alſo to comfort you? do you deſire that your Hearts might be filled with ſpiritual joyes, the joyes of the Holy Ghoſt, which are unſpeakable and full of Glory? do you deſire the comforts which Chriſt doth give, beyond all the comforts which the World and the Fleſh can give? the comforts which come in at the door of Faith, beyond all the comforts that come in at the door of Senſe; thoſe joyes which are in Chriſt, beyond all joyes that can be found in the moſt ſweet and deſireable creature-enjoyment? this evidenceth true love to Chriſt. Thus do you deſire Chriſts gracious preſence?

2. And do you deſire alſo Chriſts glorious preſence at the laſt day? When he promiſeth

seth, *Surely I come quickly*, can your hearts make answer as *Rev.* 22. 20. *Amen, even so come Lord Jesus?* are you glad you live so near the end of the World, that the Lord is at hand, that the coming of the Lord draweth nearer and nearer every day? can you lift up your heads with joy, when you look towards the place where the Lord Jesus Christ is, at *the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty on High*; and think with comfort, that *yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not now tarry much longer*; that within a while *Christ will descend from Heaven with a shout*, the Lord with the *sound of the Trumpet*, and that your eyes shall *see him in the brightness of his Glory and Majesty?* Do you look and long for the day of Christ's glorious appearance from heaven, when you shall be awakened out of your Graves (where you may take a short sleep before) and be gathered together by the Angels, and be caught up in the clouds, and there (in shining Garments of Immortality on your Bodies, and of Christs unspotted Righteousness in your Souls) be brought with shoutings and acclamations of Joy and Triumph into his presence, who will then acquit you graciously from all sin and punishment, own you openly for his faithful Servants, crown

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you gloriouſly before the whole World, and receive you to live and reign with him to all Eternity? Have you ſuch deſires as theſe? If ſome of you ſay, you are afraid of Chriſts glorious appearance, leſt then you ſhould be rejected, becauſe you fear you are not ready and prepared; yet can you ſay alſo from your Hearts, that you deſire above all things that you may be ready, that you endeavour to make ready, that it is your grief you are no more ready, and that if you were ready, and were aſſured of your intereſt in Chriſt, you could deſire that Chriſt would come immediately; and that you deſire no greater Happineſs and Felicity, than to live with Chriſt in Glory; and that you account the preſence of Chriſt in Heaven to be the Happineſs of Heaven? Theſe are evidences of true deſires after Chriſt's glorious preſence, and of ſincere love to Chriſt.

Secondly, You may know your love to Chriſt, by your prizing and frequenting thoſe wayes wherein Chriſt is to be found, and ſeeking him therein. Such are the wayes of his Ordinances both publick and private. Chriſt's way is in his Sanctuary, and in his Ordinances he may be found; do you give your attendance unto Ordinances, publick prayer, the preaching of the word,

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the Sacrament of the Lords Supper? and do you prize these Ordinances because of the stamp of Christ's Institution upon them, because of Christ's presence in them, and because they are a means of bringing you and Christ together? and when you are under Ordinances, do you diligently seek after Christ in Ordinances? Don't you rest in the outside and carnal part of Ordinances, in meeting with Gods people there? or do you design, desire and endeavour after something more inward and spiritual and incomparably sweet, that you meet with Christ there, that you may have Fellowship with the Father and the Son therein? and upon this account can you say as *David*, *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord! and a day in thy Courts is better than a thousand*, Psal. 84. 1. And, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the dayes of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple*; Psal. 27. 4. Do you also seek after Christ in your Families, and in your Closets? do you seek him in secret Prayer and Meditation? your love to Christ doth express it self in your desires; your desires do shew themselves in your seeking after Christ in his wayes.

Thirdly, You may know your love to Christ

Christ, by your love of Christ's Image: there is the Image of Christ on his Word, and there is the Image of Christ on his People.

1. Do you love the Image of Christ on his Word? as *Cæsar*'s Coin did bear *Cæsar*'s Image and Superscription, so the Word of the Scriptures, which is the Word of Christ, doth bear Christ's Image and Superscription. Do you love the Scriptures because of Christ's Image which is upon them? do you love the Word of Doctrine in the Scripture, because of the Image of Christs Truth and Wisdom upon it? do you love the Word of Precepts in the Scriptures, because of the Image of Christs Holiness upon it? do you love the Word of Threatnings in the Scriptures, because of the Image of Christ's Righteousness upon it? do you love the Word of Promises in the Scriptures, because of the Image of Christ's goodness, Grace and Love upon it? You have Christ's Word in your Bibles, and sometimes sounding in your ears, but doth the Word of Christ dwell in your Hearts? you receive Christs word in the Light of it, do you receive his Word in the Love of it?

2. Do you love Christ's Image on his People? If you love not your Brother whom you

you have seen, how can you love your Lord whom you have not seen? All Christs Disciples do bear Christs Image; if you love the Original, you will love the Picture, although it be but imperfectly drawn; If you love the perfect Goodness and Holiness which is in Christ, you will love the Goodness and Holiness which you see in the Saints, although they have it but in an imperfect Measure: do you love Christ's Disciples? and that because of Christs Image, although they differ from you in some opinions which are circumstantial?

Fourthly, You may know your love to Christ, by your Obedience unto his Commandments, *Joh.* 14.15. *If you love me, keep my Commandements*; and *ver.* 21. *He that hath my Commandements and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* You have Christ's Commandements, do you keep them? you know them, do you practise them? your Love to Christ is known by your Obedience unto Christ. If Christ be your beloved, he is also your Lord; if you have true affection for him, you yield Subjection unto him: If you Love Christ, you are careful to please Christ; you are not the servants of the flesh, to take care to please the flesh; but you are the servants of Christ, to take care above all persons and all things

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to pleaſe Chriſt; if you love Chriſt, you are fearful of giving juſt occaſion of offence unto men, but above all you are fearful of diſpleaſing and offending your Lord. Do you labour ſo to walk, that you may pleaſe Chriſt in the way of ſincere and univerſal obedience? are you hearty in your obedience unto Chriſt? have you a reſpect to all his Commandments? is it your grief that you fall ſhort in your obedience unto Chriſt? if you can ſay in the preſence of the Lord, and your hearts do not give your tongues the lye, that you don't live and allow your ſelves in the practice of any known ſin which Chriſt forbiddeth, nor in the neglect of any known duty which Chriſt commandeth, this is a ſure evidence of true love to Jeſus Chriſt. Thus for the tryal of your love unto Chriſt.

SECTION X.

Uſe 3. FOr Reproof,

1. Of all ſuch as have no love at all unto this unſeen Chriſt; and will not the uſe of Information, together with the uſe of Tryal leave a conviction upon many of you that you are without this love? ſuffer then the word of reproof; what, are you

you Creatures made by Christ, and made for Christ, and yet have no love to him? are you rational Creatures, have you souls capable of knowing him, and loving him, and yet have no love? are you Christians, and not love Christ; baptized in Christ's Name, and yet have you no love to Christs Person? are some of you Professours, and yet not love Christ? make a show of devotion, and yet without any true affection to the object of your worship? Sinners, though you have not seen Christ, yet have you not heard of him? and have you not heard enough to engage and draw forth your love unto Christ. What do you think? is there such a person as Jesus Christ, or is there not? have you no Bibles? and if you have, have you not read therein the History concerning Jesus Christ? and what do you think of that History? is it true, or is it false? do you think the Gospel to be a cunningly devised fable? are not the Scriptures which contain this Gospel, the very word of the true God who cannot lye? are there not such characters of Divinity upon them, as are sufficient to evince their divine original to any that search into them, and do not wilfully shut their eyes against the light which there doth shine? And if it be so, that there is indeed such a person as Jesus Christ

(as there is nothing more true) how is it that you have no love unto him? do not the Scriptures reveal and set forth Christ, as the most excellent and amiable person, and yet do you not love him? can you love persons and things that are but imperfectly lovely, and not love Jesus Christ who is altogether lovely? can you love one of great honour that hath but some inferior power and authority, and not love Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of Glory, who hath all power and Authority both in Heaven and Earth? can you love such as have Wisdom and Learning, though it be terrene, and not love Jesus Christ who is the wisdom of the Father, who knoweth all things, and whose wisdom is divine? can you love such as are liberal and bountiful, and not love Christ whose bounty is superlative, and whose gifts are most rich and transcendent? can you love friends that are kind, and not love Jesus Christ who is the best friend that ever the children of men had? can you love a benefactor that feeds you, and cloaths you, and giveth money to you, and yet not love Christ who offereth to feed your hunger starv'd souls with the bread of life, to cloath your naked souls with the robes of his Righteousness, and to give the spiritual riches of Grace to you, the least dram of

which is of more worth than all the riches of the Earth? can you love Riches, and not love Christ in whom there are treasures, and by whom you may have not only spiritual riches here, but also the heavenly inheritance hereafter? can you love honours, and not love Christ by whom you may have the highest dignities, the honour of children to the King of Heaven now, and a Crown of Glory in the other world? can you love liberty, and not love Christ by whom you may be made free from the slavery of the Devil and your own lusts? can you love safety, and not love Christ who is the only Saviour of mankind, and who alone puts you in safety from the reach of the worst of Enemies, and the worst of evils? can you love peace, and not love Christ by whom you may have peace with God, and peace in your own conscience? can you love pleasures and delights, and not love Christ by whom you may have joys unspeakable and full of glory, besides those everlasting pleasures which are to come? without love to Christ you are under the guilt of all your sins; neither your original sin, nor any of your actual sins are pardoned, they all lye upon your own score, and you must answer for all your selves, and how fearful is your account like to be! without

love

love to Chriſt you are under the curſe, not only under the curſe of the Law for your breach of the Law, but alſo under the curſe of the Goſpel for diſobedience to this command of the Goſpel, which requireth you to love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 16. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be Anathema Maranatha*, that is, Let him be curſed, till the Lord come, and when the Lord cometh, will he take off the curſe from you? no, he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance upon you, having threatned then to puniſh all ſuch with everlaſting deſtruction, as ſhall be found to have diſobeyed the Goſpel; and what then is like to become of you? *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, thoſe wicked Cities will then be puniſhed dreadfully, with a worſe fire than that which was rained down from Heaven, and conſumed their perſons and habitations together; I mean, with the fire of Hell, which will be kindled and kept alive unto Eternity by the breath of the Almighty; but you who do not love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, notwithſtanding all diſcoveries of him, invitations to him, and proffers of kindneſſes by him, you will be puniſhed more dreadfully than the wicked *Sodomites*, it will be more tolerable in the day of Judgment for them than for you; the torments

of Hell will be intolerable by any, but they will be most intolerable by Gospel sinners; the fire of Hell will burn upon you the most fiercely, and the scourge of Conscience will lash you the most furiously. Consider this, all ye that have no love to Christ, otherwise when he cometh to judgment, he will tear you to pieces, and there will be none to deliver you; if you have not the sweet fire of love to Christ enkindled in your hearts here, you will be thrown into the dreadful fire of Hell which will burn you everlastingly.

2. This reproves such of you as have some love, but it is very little love to Jesus Christ; you that love Christ, is not your love very small, not only in comparison with his love to you, but also in comparison with the love which some Christians have attained unto? how strong was the love of the Apostles unto Christ, when they left all and followed him? especially after the resurrection of Christ, and his Ascension into Heaven, when the holy Ghost was sent down, and sat in the likeness of fiery tongues upon them: O! what a fire of love unto Christ was there then enkindled within them. Hence that bold profession which they make of Christ before the chief Priests and Elders, *Act.* 4. Hence their rejoycing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the

the name of Christ, when they were beaten for their owning and preaching of him, *Act.* 5.41. The love of *Peter* and *John* was great unto Christ, and the love of *Paul* was not inferiour unto the love of the chiefest Apostles; hence it was that he took such pains to preach the Gospel in so many parts of the World, even from *Jerusalem* and round about unto *Illyricum*, Rom. 15.19. See also how he approves himself to be a Minister of Christ, and giveth evidences of his strong love to his Master, 2 *Cor.* 11.23,24,25,26,27,28,29. *Are they Ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool, I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in Deaths oft: of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one: Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned, thrice I suffered Shipwrack, a Night and a Day I have been in the deep, in journeying often, in perils of Waters, in perils of Robbers, in perils by mine own Countrey men, in perils by the Heathen, in perils in the City, in perils in the Wilderness, in perils in the Sea, in perils among false Brethren: in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches; who is weak, and I am not weak? who is*

offended, and I burn not? and chap. 12. 10. *I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christs sake.* The ground of all which was the love of Christ, which did constrain him; as 1 *Cor.* 5. 14. he had such a love to Christ, that he professeth, *Phillip.* 1. 21. *To me to live is Christ, and to dye is gain.* Christ was his life, and his life was wholly at Christs devotion.

But where is such love now to be found? I might speak also of the love of some ancient Fathers, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, *Jerome* and others: take one Instance in *Jerome*, who thus expresseth his love unto Christ: *If my Father were weeping on his Knees before me, my Mother hanging on my Neck behind me, my Brethren, Sisters and Kinsfolk howling on every side, to retain me in a sinful course; I would sling my Mother to the ground, run over my Father, despise all my Kindred, and tread them under my Feet, that I might run unto Christ.* How little is your love in comparison with the love of those Famous Hero's, I mean those eminent Martyrs, who have despised the Flames, and endured such Racking and Torturing Deaths, for the love which they have born unto Jesus Christ; the fire of their Love burning stronger within them, than the fire without them in which their

their Bodies were conſumed? Is not your love alſo ſmall in compariſon with the love of our late Reformers, which fired them with ſuch courage and reſolution, as to withſtand a whole world of Antichriſtian fury and oppoſition? Is your love comparable to that of many Eminent Divines, and private Chriſtians of our own Nation, of the Age immediately going before, who are now aſleep in their Graves; but how few are there come up in their rooms? It is obſerved, and it is greatly to be lamented, that there is of late years a great decay in the Power of Godlineſs, amongſt thoſe that are Sincere; and is it not evident in the great decay of love, even in true Chriſtians unto Jeſus Chriſt? are not you Dwarfs in compariſon with others? are not you Babes in Chriſt, and Weaklings in your love to Chriſt? Is it not evident, that you have but little love to Chriſt, when he is but little in your Thoughts and Meditations? the thoughts are the Handmaids of the Love; where the Love is ſtrong and ardent, there many thoughts will be attending upon it: but will not your Hearts tell you, that your Thoughts of Chriſt are very few? you can think often of your Food, but how little do your Thoughts feed upon Chriſt, who is the Bread of Life? You can often think of your

Rayment, but how little do you think of the Robes of Christ's Righteousness? You can think often of your earthly Friends, but how little do you think of Jesus Christ, your Friend in Heaven? Objects of Sense are often not only in your eyes, but also in your thoughts; but how little is Christ entertained in your thoughts, who is the Object of Faith? Moreover, doth it not argue little Love to Christ, that you speak so little of him and for him, in your converse one with another? If you had much Love to Christ, would not this Love breath forth more in your Discourses? You can readily speak of your selves, and do often either directly or obliquely commend your selves, which discovers your great Self-love; how little do you commend your Lord and Master, and Extoll his Excellencies with your lips? and doth not this evidence that you have but little love to him, in your hearts? You can readily discourse of News and publick Occurrences (which is lawful and needful, so that due limits be observed) but when you leave Christ quite out of your Discourse, it shews that you have not abundance of Love to him, because out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth will speak. Such as have much love to the world, will speak of their Riches; such as have much love to Pleasures,

sures, will be often speaking of that subject; such as love their Friends much, will be often speaking and commending of them, when they are in company; and when you speak but little of Christ, it is a sign that you love him but little. Doth not the little Zeal which you have for Christs Honour in the World, argue that you have but little Love to him? where is your activity for Christ, to promote his Interest amongst those Relations and Friends, that you have acquaintance with? do you labour all you can, to bring others into the wayes of God, and into acquaintance with Christ? Besides, will not your little secret Devotion, argue your little Affection unto Christ? will not your closets or other retiring places witness how little you are in secret Prayer and converse with Christ there? brief and straitned Prayer in secret, doth argue a Heart straitned in love to Jesus Christ. Doth not your Backwardness to the Exercise of this Love to Christ, shew the weakness of your love? how slow of Heart are you to the Love of Christ? how hard to be perswaded? you need not be perswaded to Love your Wives, if they be kind and helpful; you need not be perswaded to love your Children, if they be Pretty and Hopeful; you need not be perswaded to love your Friends, if they be

Friendly and Faithful: and yet whatever attractives of Love, the most strong of any, be in Jesus Christ, you are backward to this Love.

Need I say more to convince you, that you have but little Love to Christ? will not your own Conscience from these clear Evidences sufficiently witness the thing? and now Christians, think what a sin, what a shame, what a folly it is, that you should have so little Love unto Jesus Christ: If it be so great a Sin for such as are Strangers unto Christ, to have no Love at all to him, that it brings them under the most dreadful curse; surely it cannot be a small sin, that you (who are his true Disciples) should have but little Love unto him; is it not very displeasing to the Father, that you should have but little love to his Son? if he do not hate you because of your Relation unto Christ; yet, is he not angry with you, for the Lukewarmness of your Affection unto Christ? which sin is aggravated by the nearness of your Relation. Is it not dishonourable unto Christ, that you should have so little Love to him? don't you in effect say, there is no great worth or amiableness in him, when you have no great Love unto him? are you not hereby ungrateful unto Christ, beyond what can be parallell'd by

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any ingratitude unto the moſt obliging earthly Friend? is it not your ſhame, that you ſhould have ſo little Love to Chriſt, when he doth ſo much deſerve your Love? Beſides, the Infinite Excellencies and Perfections which are in his Perſon; doth not his Infinite Kindneſs unto you, call for (not only the Truth, but alſo) the Strength of your Love? think what he hath done for you; think what he hath Suffered for you; think what he hath purchaſed for you; think what he hath promiſed to you; think what he hath laid out for you; think what he hath laid up for you, and yet to have but little Love to Chriſt? yet to make ſuch poor Returns! Moreover, is it not your Folly to have but little Love to Chriſt? Don't you hereby bereave your ſelves, or debar your ſelves of ſuch peace as paſſeth all underſtanding; of ſuch ſweetneſs and comfort both in the ſtrength of your love, and in the ſenſe of his love, as is inconceivable? is not Injury and Miſchief unto your ſelves, the conſequent of your little Love unto Chriſt? muſt you not draw on heavily in the wayes of God, as *Pharaoh* when his Chariot-wheels were taken off? Love to Chriſt is like wheels, in your motion for Chriſt, and like Oil to the wheels, which makes you ready unto any good work which he doth call you

unto; but when you have but little Love unto Christ, you must needs be more slow in your motions, more sluggish in Christs service; you will not, you cannot take that pains in the work of the Lord, and be so Zealous as you might and should be for your Master's Glory.

To Conclude, if you have but little love to Christ, you will be apt to faint in the day of Adversity, to shrink when you are called to take up his Cross and suffer for his sake: lesser sufferings will discompose you, greater sufferings will affrighten and amaze you, and you will be in danger of turning fearful Apostates in time of great Tryals; there is need of great love to Christ, as well as great faith, to carry you thorow sufferings with courage, that you may persevere unto the end.

SECTION XI.

Use 4. FOr Exhortation, unto the love of Jesus Christ, whom you have never seen, this is the Use chiefly designed in the choice of this subject, and which I shall most largely insist upon. In the Prosecution of it, I shall give some Motives, and then some Directions.

The Motives to induce and excite you unto

to the Love of this unſeen Chriſt, may be drawn, 1. From the conſideration of what Chriſt is. 2. From the conſideration of Chriſts Love. 3. From the conſideration of Chriſts Benefits. 4. From the conſideration of that Love which Chriſtians have, and ſhould have unto Chriſt.

The firſt ſort of Motives may be drawn from the conſideration of what Chriſt is, and that 1. What he is in Himſelf. 2. What he is to the Father. 3. What he is unto true Chriſtians.

Firſt, *Conſider what Chriſt is in Himſelf.*

In general, he is the moſt amiable perſon and the moſt ſuitable Object for your Love. If you ask of the dayes which are paſt, which were before you ſince the day that God created Man upon the Earth; if you ſeek from one ſide of Heaven unto the other; if you make enquiry into all the parts of the Earth, you will never find that either there ever was or is to be found any perſon ſo lovely, ſo beautiful and ſo every way deſerving your Love, as the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; there is a Matchleſs, Tranſcendent, and incomparable Beauty and Excellency in him. How paſſionately are ſome Fooliſh Men in Love with the external beauty which they ſee in ſome Women: the exact Symetry of parts, and comely Proportion of the body:

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the amiable features, and lovely mixtures of colours in the Face, the Beauty of the Eyes, in their Spirit, their quick and graceful motions, and amorous Glances; How doth this Ravish the Hearts of some fond Lovers! although the most beautiful body in the World, is no better than painted clay, dirt and corruption, enclosed in a fair Skin, which sickness will cause to look pale and wan, Death will quite marre and spoil. But the amiableness and Beauty of Christ is more transcendent and permanent, and therefore a more fit Object for your Love. Christ is fairer than the Children of Men; he is all fair, without any spot, altogether lovely, without any blemish or deformity. I have already spoken of the Glorious Beauty which is in Christs glorified Body, the most lovely of any visible creature which God hath made; and also of the shining excellencies which are in Christ's glorified Soul, so nearly joyned to the Divinity; could we suppose all the Lovelineſs that ever was seen, or found in the most lovely persons that ever lived, to meet in one person; how Lovely would that person be! yet such, though never so resplendent Beauty, would be but a dark Shadow, compared with the brightness of Christ's most Beautiful Person. Can you Love the imperfect

Beauty

Beauty which you ſee in Creatures, and will you not love the perfect Beauty which there is in Chriſt? can you love a fading Beauty which ſoon withereth like the Flower, and will you not love Chriſt, whoſe Beauty never decayes, but alwayes doth abide more freſh than Beauty in the Flower of Youth? can you be ſoon affected with Beautiful Objects which are before the Eye of your Senſe, and will you not be affected with this far more beautiful Object, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is ſo clearly diſcernable by the Eye of Faith? If the Eye of your Faith were open and clear, to look upon the Tranſcendent amiableneſs which is in Chriſt, you could not chuſe but love him: could you ſee the glances of his Eye, and the ſweet ſmiles of his lovely face, as ſome have ſeen, your Hearts would be overcome and raviſhed with Love, and filled with Extacies of Joy and ineffable Delight.

More Particularly, There are the moſt Amiable Qualifications in Chriſts Perſon, to attract and draw forth your Love; I ſhall inſtance in theſe ſix. 1. *His Greatneſs and Authority.* 2. *His Holineſs and Purity.* 3. *His Wiſdom and Omniſciency.* 4. *His Truth and Fidelity.* 5. *His Fulneſs and All-ſufficiency.* 6. *His Kindneſs and Mercy.*

1. *Conſider Chriſt's Greatneſs and Authority;*

rity, Aquila non capit muscas, *The Eagle doth not pursue after Flies:* Great Souls are not affected, except it be with great Things; there is none so great as Jesus Christ; He is most great in Honour and Dignity, He is most great in Power and Authority. Excellency of Majesty, doth greatly engage the Love, and command the Hearts as well as the Obedience of Subjects: and those Princes that have the greatest Power and Authority, are the Darlings of the people, when they don't abuse their place by Unrighteousness and Cruelty, by Usurpation and Tyranny. If Power be managed with Clemency, and Authority with kindness towards those that are under command; so highly do Princes advance themselves hereby in the esteem and Love of their people, that they will be ready to spend their Estates, and venture their Lives in their Service. Christ is the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, he is cloathed with the Highest Honour, arrayed with the most excellent Majesty, decked with the largest Power, and invested with the greatest Authority. He is the King and Lord of Glory, he is exalted to Higher Dignity than the greatest Potentate that ever lived upon the Earth; yea he is advanced above all Thrones and Dominions, and Principalities and Pow-

ers,

ers, of the glorious Angels which are in Heaven; *All Power is given to him in Heaven and Earth*, Mat. 28. 18. He doth what he will in Heaven, the Angels are at his Beck, and execute his Will, go and come at his Command; and he hath Power on Earth; He is the Head of the Church; and Head over all unto the Church; he can restrain his Enemies, and conquer them, and bring them under his Feet at his pleasure; and whatever severity he doth shew sometimes in executing his Judgments, and taking Vengeance on the Wicked, he doth never abuse his Power by Unrighteousness; He is most Just towards the worst, and punisheth them here less than their iniquities do deserve. But what kindness and clemency doth he shew to his own subjects and people! and will not you have a great love to so great a Person? should not the consideration of the high dignity of your Lord, raise your love of him unto a great heighth? when Christ hath such Authority, shall he not command your hearts? when Christ is invested with such power that he can defend you against the rage and cruelty of your most powerful and malicious adversaries, will you not love greatly such a Person, as well as trust confidently under the shadow of his Government?

2. Consider Christs Holiness and Purity,

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ſome great Perſons who abound in Wealth and Honour, who have ſome kind of amiable natural qualities, and acquired accompliſhments which might render them very uſeful in their Countries, yet through their wickedneſs and debauchery, their filthineſs and impurity, their impious and vicious lives, they ſtain all their other excellencies, and render themſelves the objects of contempt and ſcorn, unto thoſe who otherwiſe would bear great reſpect and love to them.

But Chriſt is moſt amiable for his Holineſs and Purity; he was holy in his birth; although born of a ſinful woman, yet he was born without ſin; when he lived amongſt impure ſinners he kept his garments from all ſtains and ſpots, his heart and life were free from all pollutions, and never was he guilty of the leaſt tranigreſſion either in action or the leaſt inclination. O what an excellent Perſon was Chriſt when here upon the Earth! how glorious in holineſs, what bright beams of perfect purity and exact innocency did Chriſt ſcatter in thoſe dark places of the Earth where he lived, and amongſt thoſe dark ſullied ſinners with whom he did converſe! how then doth Chriſt ſhine in holineſs, now he is entred into the Holy of Holies, which is above; and there doth converſe with none but ſuch as are Holy? I know,

know, becauſe of Chriſts Holineſs and Purity, he is the object of the hatred and enmity of the wicked and ungodly; becauſe Chriſt is an enemy unto their darling and beloved luſts, they have an enmity againſt Chriſts Perſon: when he was here below, he telleth his brethren, *John 7.7. The World hateth me, becauſe I teſtifie of it, that the works thereof are evil*; and the hatred of the world doth ſtill abide upon the ſame account; Chriſt doth reprove the world of ſin, and this the world cannot endure and away with; the beams of Chriſts Holineſs do offend their ſore eyes, his holy precepts do offend their carnal hearts; yet notwithſtanding this, he is a moſt ſuitable object for the love of Saints upon the account of his Holineſs: ſuch as are truly judicious, will love them moſt who are beſt, and ſuch are really the beſt Men and Women in the world, as are moſt holy; if you are Chriſt's Diſciples indeed, you love holineſs where ever you ſee it, and can you love the imperfect holineſs which is in Gods people, and will you not love Chriſt who is perfectly, infinitely holy himſelf, and the ſpring of all that holineſs, which is to be found in any of the Children of Men? if there be ſuch a wonderful luſtre in the derived holineſs of ſome, that it makes them to ſhine as lights in a dark World, what a wonder-

wonderful transcendent lustre is there in the original holiness which is in Christ! which as it is matter of great admiration, so it calls for great affection, *Psal.* 119. 140. *Thy Word is very pure, therefore thy Servant loveth it.* Christ is the Word, not the written Word, but the essential Word, and he is very pure, therefore you should love him.

3. Consider Christ's Wisdom and Omniscience. Wisdom doth make the face to shine; Learning doth advance some very highly in esteem; such as know most, if their morals be suitable to their intellectuals, are most admired by those that understand what true worth is; especially if there be spiritual Wisdom in conjunction with natural and acquired, if there be much Grace in the heart as well as much Knowledge in the head; how worthy are such to be beloved? *Daniel* was a man of great learning and wisdom, skill'd in all the learning of the *Chaldeans* which was not sinful and diabolical; and besides this, he was endued with divine wisdom by the teachings of the Holy Spirit; the Angel told this *Daniel* more than once or twice, that he was *a Man greatly beloved*; he was greatly beloved by the Lord of Heaven, greatly beloved by his Prince on Earth, and greatly beloved by his people, and by all, except some

some few that envyed his prosperity and favour. *Daniels* Wisdom did render him so universally amiable; How then should Christ be beloved because of his Wisdom and Knowledge! the Wisdom of Christ is far beyond the Wisdom of *Daniel*, or the Wisdom of *Solomon* who was wiser than *Daniel*; these men had Wisdom which made them famous and esteemed in their day, but Christ is Wisdom, the Wisdom of the Father; they were children of wisdom, but Christ is the Father and Fountain of wisdom; they had some jewels of wisdom, but the treasures of wisdom are hid and laid up in Christ, *Col.* 2. 3. they had learning and knowledge, but their knowledge was Ignorance compared with the knowledge of Christ, the greatest part of the things which they knew, being but the least part of the things which they knew not; they knew some things, but Christ is omniscient and knoweth all things; they knew many secrets of nature, but Christ knoweth the secrets of Heaven, the mind of God, and nothing is hid from him. How greatly beloved then should Christ be! if you are wise you will, if you would be wise you must love Christ who is so infinitely wise himself, and who alone can make you truly wise.

4. Consider Christs Truth and Fidelity,

Truth

Truth and Faithfulneſs are very rare in our dayes, when Falſhood and Deceit do ſo much abound; what was ſaid of old, *Iſa.* 59. 14, 15. *Truth faileth and falleth in the Street*; the ſame may be ſaid now; and therefore ſuch as are True without Guile, Faithful without Deceit, are worthy of great eſteem and Love. But what Love ſhould you give unto Chriſt, who is not only True, but Truth it ſelf; who is moſt Faithful in all his undertakings and promiſes, and never deceived any that put their truſt in him, who is often better than his word, never worſe; you will love a true and faithful Friend, and will you not love a true and faithful Chriſt, the beſt Friend of the children of Men? as Chriſts faithfulneſs ſhould encourage your confidence in him, ſo it ſhould endear your love unto him.

5. Conſider Chriſts fulneſs and All-ſufficiency. Such as have large and plentiful Eſtates, are greatly beloved by the poor and indigent, if they find them alſo to have large Hearts and open Hands, ready to diſtribute unto their wants and neceſſities; none have ſuch fulneſs and plenty as the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and none ſo willing to communicate of his fulneſs unto the wants of ſuch as are poor in Spirit, and ſenſible of their need; *Col.* 1. 19. *It hath pleaſed the Father that in him all fulneſs*

fulneſs ſhould dwell. There is not only plenty in him, but fulneſs: not the fulneſs of the Ciſtern, but the fulneſs of the Fountain; not the fulneſs only of ſufficiency for himſelf, but the fulneſs of redundancy for his people; not ſome fulneſs for ſome things, but all fulneſs for all things that are good; not fulneſs for ſome time and to continue but for a while, but all fulneſs doth dwell in him, and abide for all his people throughout all Generations; and this not to depend upon the pleaſure of men whoſe minds may alter, but it hath pleaſed the Father, it dependeth upon the pleaſure of the Father, who is always the ſame, and whoſe good will to his people is unchangeable. There is a twofold fulneſs in Chriſt for his people here; beſides his fulneſs of Glory which hath a reference to Eternity. There is a fulneſs of Merit, and a fulneſs of Spirit. 1. A fulneſs of Merit, in that full and perfect Righteouſneſs which he hath wrought out for them, and which he doth impute unto them for their Juſtification. 2. There is a fulneſs of Spirit in Chriſt, the Spirit being given unto him without meaſure, which he doth impart and communicate unto them, for their Sanctification and Conſolation. Chriſtians, you are empty, Chriſt is full; you are poor, Chriſt is rich; you are indi-

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gent, Christ is All-sufficient; and will not you love Christ, who is able to do for you beyond what you are able to ask or think, and is as willing as he is able to supply all your Spiritual necessities? will you not love Christ who is an Overflowing and Everflowing Fountain of Good, who hath inexhaustible treasures of Graces and Comforts in him, which are set open before you, and unto you, and every day you may freely come and fetch such jewels out of this Treasury, as are of higher worth and greater use than any Earthly Riches in the greatest Plenty and abundance?

6. Consider Christs kindness and mercy. All the kindness of Men is unkindness compared with the kindness of Christ, all the Mercies of Men are Cruelty, compared with the Mercies of Christ. He is all kindness, all bowels, all compassion, all pity, all grace, all mercy to miserable lost mankind; I shall not enlarge here, because this will fall under the second head of Arguments, taken from the consideration of Christs Love. And if you add the kindness and mercy of Christ to all his other excellencies and perfections, surely he will appear to have incomparably the greatest attractives in him for Love, unto any that have not a very thick veil of unbelief before their Eyes

Eyes to hide him from their view.

Secondly, Consider what Christ is to the Father. 1. He is most nearly related to him. 2. He is most dearly beloved by him.

1. Christ is most nearly Related, and withall most perfectly like unto the Father. All the Creatures are related to God as their Maker, but Gods Children are more nearly related; the Saints are nearly related to God, who are his Children by Adoption and Regeneration; the Angels are more nearly related to God who are his Sons by Creation, and never were separated from him by sin; but the Lord Jesus Christ is most nearly related unto God, who is his Son by eternal Generation: thus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, and doth bear his Image most perfectly, being the brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his person. This near Relation of Christ, and his likeness to the Father, doth call for your strongest love; if you have reason to honour the Father, on the same account you have reason to honour the Son; if you have reason to love the Father, you have the same reason to love the Son. You will love the Sons of Princes, and will you not love the Son of God? you will love your own children who bear your own Image, and will not you love Christ

who is the expreſs Image of God? we read of Chriſt, *Phil.* 2. 6. *Who being in the form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God.* Chriſt (without Robbery or Derogation unto God) is equal with God in all glorious Excellencies and Perfections, and therefore your higheſt and ſtrongeſt love is his due, and without robbery you cannot withhold it from him.

2. Chriſt is moſt dearly beloved by the Father, 2 *Pet.* 1. 17. *For he received from God the Father, Honour and Glory, when there came ſuch a voice to him, from the excellent Glory: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed*; he then that is worthy of the Fathers love, ſurely is worthy of yours; he that is chiefly beloved by the Father, ſhould chiefly be beloved by you.

Thirdly, Conſider what Chriſt is unto all true Chriſtians; if you be ſuch, Chriſt is your Shepherd, he feedeth you in green Paſtures, he hath laid down his life for his Sheep, and will you not love ſuch a Shepherd? he is your Captain who hath conquered all your Enemies for you, and leadeth you on to take the ſpoils, and will you not love ſuch a leader? He is your Prophet, who teacheth you the moſt excellent things that ever were taught, the higheſt myſteries, the moſt glorious truths, which are

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of the greateſt concernment to know and believe; and he teacheth you by the moſt excellent way, by his Word and Spirit, opening your underſtandings as well as his Truths, giving you light and an eye to diſcern this light; and will you not love ſuch a teacher? He is your High-Prieſt who hath made ſatisfaction for you, and withal maketh interceſſion for you, to reconcile you unto God, and his interceſſion is inceſſant and prevalent; and will you not love ſuch an Advocate? He is your King who ruleth you moſt powerfully and righteouſly, moſt wiſely and graciouſly, and will you not love ſuch a Soveraign. He is your Benefactor, the moſt kind and bountiful, and no gifts are comparable unto his gifts, and will you not love ſuch a friend? He is your Brother, and if he be not aſhamed to own you for his Brethren and Siſters, will it not be a ſhame if you ſhould withhold from him your hearts? He is your husband, and you are joyned to him by the Spirit and Faith in ſuch bonds as cannot be broken, and will not you embrace him in the arms of your deareſt love? He is your Redeemer, who reſcued and delivered you from Sin and Sathan, from Death and Wrath: He hath redeemed you by price, the price of his blood, and hath he not then given the greateſt

price for your Love? he hath redeemed you also by conquest, and shall he not make a conquest of your hearts? Surely you are altogether unworthy of these relations, if you do not present Christ with your most endeared and choicest Affections. Thus far the Motives drawn from the Consideration of what Christ is.

SECTION XII.

THe second sort of Motives to excite your Love to Christ, may be drawn from the consideration of Christs love unto true Christians. If you are Christians indeed, Christ loveth you, 1. With the Freest Love. 2. With the truest Love. 3. With the strongest Love. 4. With the surest Love.

1. Consider, that Christ loveth you with the freest Love: There are many motives and attractives for your Love to Christ, but Christs love to you is most free; nothing in your selves to draw and engage his love, except deformity and enmity to him, except filthiness which he loatheth, and wickedness which his soul hateth, be motives. There is no man in the world that loveth you but he findeth or fancyeth some loveliness in you, something to be a motive

to

to draw his love to you; wit is a motive to ſome, wealth to others; beauty to ſome, ſtrength to others; near Relation to ſome, dear love to others; liberality to ſome, ſervice to others; greatneſs to ſome, goodneſs to others; likeneſs, whether it be in good or evil, is a motive to the love of the moſt: But Chriſts firſt love to you, is altogether free; that which is a motive to men, and induceth their love to you, is no motive to incline the Love of Chriſt: the ſin which you brought into the world with you, and the many ſins which ſince you came into the world have been committed by you, are enough to ſhut out all motives of Love in Chriſt, unto whom all ſin is ſo odious and abominable. Whatever motive induced Chriſt to love you, it was not drawn from your ſelves, but it was drawn from his own bowels. And will not this free love of Chriſt incline you to love him? Doth he love you moſt freely, and will not you love him moſt dearly? Did Chriſt love you without any motive to draw his love; and will not you love Chriſt in whom there are ſo many motives to draw your love? Did Chriſt begin to love, and will not you make a return? Did Chriſt love you under your deformity, and will not you love him in whom there is ſuch perfect beauty? If you

now have any ſpiritual beauty, it is through the comelineſs which Chriſt hath put upon you, but Chriſts firſt love was free, which is matter of the greateſt admiration, and ſhould be a motive unto the greateſt Affection.

2. Conſider, that Chriſt loveth you with the trueſt love: There is little true love in the world, you have many that truly hate you, few that truely love you; and there is much diſſimulation in the pretended love and affection of ſome; all that flatter you, do not truly love you; love in ſhew and outward appearance, in good words and fair ſpeeches, is common, but love in deed and in truth, that evidenceth it ſelf in real offices of Love, where there is the greateſt need, this is rarely to be found. *Job* complaineth, *Job* 6. 15, 16, 17. *My brethren have dealt deceitfully like a brook, and as the ſtream of brooks they paſs away; which are blackiſh by reaſon of the ice, and wherein the ſnow is hid; what time they wax warm they vaniſh, when it is hot they are conſumed out of their place.* In the proſperity of *Job* he had many friends, and their love and friendſhip did ſeem to have ſome ſtrength and conſiſtency, like the ice upon the brook; but when heat of trouble and calamity came upon *Job*, then the love of his friends did melt

melt and vaniſh away like ice and ſnow before the warm beams of the Sun: the Love of the moſt is ſelfiſh, for their own ends, and therefore when their love is not like to be beneficial, but rather create trouble and prejudice to themſelves, it cometh to nothing. True Chriſtianity doth teach another kind of Love, and thoſe that are powerfully religious have a true love, which is ready to ſhew it ſelf moſt in an adverſe eſtate. But none do or can love you with ſuch a true love as Jeſus *Chriſt*; there is no flattery or diſſimulation in his Love, his love is not in the leaſt counterfeit, it is not in the leaſt ſelfiſh and for his own ends; he doth not love you to receive good from you, but that he might do good unto you; He loveth you not only in Proſperity, but chiefly he doth evidence his love in Affliction and adverſity. He is a preſent help in the time of trouble, and then doth give the moſt tender demonſtrations of his Love; he is touched with the feeling of your infirmities when you are tempted, and ſympathizeth with you in your ſorrows when you are afflicted; he ſhews his Love in viſiting you under your troubles, in ſupporting you, in relieving you, and in delivering you: Oh! what love ſhould you have unto the Lord Jeſus *Chriſt*, who loveth you with ſuch a true love?

3. Conſider, that *Chriſt* loveth you with the ſtrongeſt love. His love is more ſtrong than Death, more ardent than the Fire, which hath a moſt vehement Flame. The ſtrength of Chriſts Love to you doth ſhew it ſelf in the activity of his Love, in his doing for you; and this will appear in three things: 1. In what he hath done for you. 2. In what he is doing for you. 3. In what he will do for you.

1. The ſtrength and activity of Chriſts love to you, doth ſhew it ſelf in what Chriſt hath done for you; I ſhall briefly name ſome particulars. 1. It was the ſtrong Love of Chriſt which brought him down from Heaven for you, to aſſume your Nature; what manner of love was this, that God ſhould become Man! that Spirit ſhould become fleſh! that he who made the world ſhould be born of a mean Virgin; and all for your ſakes! 2. It was the love of Chriſt which made him to fulfill all righteouſneſs for you; he yielded perfect obedience to the Law both Moral and Ceremonial, that you might have the benefit of it. 3. It was the Love of Chriſt which made him ſubmit himſelf to the temptations of the Devil for you, that he, ſuffering being tempted, might be able to ſuccour you when you are tempted. 4. It was the

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Love of Chriſt which made him endure the contradictions of ſinners for you; he bore many affronts, contumelies, envyings and blaſphemies of wicked men, that he might give you an example how to carry your ſelves under the like circumſtances. 5. It was the Love of Chriſt which made him lay down his Life for you, *Joh.* 15. 13, 14. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend: ye are my friends.* That ſuch a perſon as Chriſt, ſo excellent, ſo innocent, ſhould undergo death, and ſuch a death as that of the Croſs, ſo diſgraceful, ſo painful; that he ſhould ſubmit to ſuch Ignominy, and endure ſuch Agony, ſuch tearings in his fleſh, ſuch preſſures in his Spirit, and that with ſuch reſolution and willingneſs, with ſuch ſubmiſſion and patience, and that for ſuch as you, although now his friends, yet whilſt in a ſtate of Nature ſtrangers and enemies; here was Love ſtronger than death! Oh the heighth! Oh the depth of this Love! There are ſuch dimenſions in this love of Chriſt, as the longeſt line of your moſt extended thoughts and imaginations can never be able to reach and meaſure. 6. It was the Love of Chriſt which raiſed him again from the dead for you; *Rom.* 4. 25. *Who was delivered for our offences, and raiſed again for*

our justification. 7. It was the Love of Christ which carryed him up from Earth to Heaven, where he was before for you, *Joh.* 16. 7. *Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

2. The strength and activity of Christs Love to you, doth shew it self in what he is doing for you. 1. He is interceding for you at the right hand of God, *Rom.* 8. 34. *Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* It is through Love that Christ doth plead for you in Heaven, that your persons may be accepted, your sins pardoned, your prayers answered, and that the Holy Ghost may be sent down to you, to teach, sanctifie and comfort you. 2. He is preparing a place for you, *Joh.* 14. 2. *In my fathers house there are many Mansions, if it were not so I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you.* It is through love that Christ as your forerunner is for you entred into the glorious Palace that is above, to take possession of it for you, and to prepare places there for your reception.

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3. The ſtrength and activity of Chriſt's love to you doth ſhew it ſelf in what he will do for you. 1. He will keep you in his hand that none ſhall pluck you thence, *Joh.* 10. 28. *They ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any man pluck them out of my hand.* Becauſe you are received into the arms of his love, therefore you ſhall be kept by the hand of his power, and therefore you ſhall never either finally or totally fall away. 2. Chriſt will make all things work together for your good, *Rom.* 8. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.* Chriſt hath an endeared love to all you that love God, your love being the fruit of his; and when Men and Devils conſpire together to do you miſchief, Chriſts love will turn it unto your ſpiritual advantage. 3. Chriſt will ſtand by you in trouble and at death, *Joh.* 14. 18. *I will not leave you comfortleſs, I will come unto you.* When affliction doth ariſe, eſpecially if it be for his ſake, and you are bereaved of all outward Comforts, Chriſt will not leave you comfortleſs; when friends fail, and fleſh fails, and Heart fails, yea and life fails, Chriſt will not fail, but will ſtand by and ſtrengthen you, and be a light to you in your darkeſt hours, a ſtay to your Spirits when they are ready to ſink

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within you. 4. After death Christ will take care of your Souls, he will not suffer them to wander they know not whither, he will not suffer the Devil to seize on them as his prey, but he will send his Angels to conduct and convey them into the heavenly paradise, that where he is there they may be also; *Luk.* 16. 22. *And it came to pass that the Beggar died, and was carryed by the Angels into Abrahams bosom.* 2 Cor. 5. 8. *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.* 5. Christ will raise up your Bodies at the last day; if your Bodies should be consumed by Fire, or drowned in the Water, or rot in the Earth, whatever becometh of them, the Lord Jesus at his second glorious appearance will find them, and raise them, and transform them into the likeness of his most glorious body. *Joh.* 6. 40. *And this is the Fathers will which hath sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have Everlasting Life; and I will raise him up at the last day.* Philip. 3. 20, 21. *For our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body.* 6. Christ will send forth his Angels, to gather you in-

to the ſociety of the Elect that have lived in all Ages and all Parts of the World, and to convey you into his preſence, to meet him in the Air, when he cometh to Judge the World, *Mat.* 24. 31. *And he ſhall ſend his Angels with a great ſound of a Trumpet, and they ſhall gather together his Elect from the four Winds, from one end of Heaven unto the other.* 1 Theſ. 4. 16, 17. *For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt; then we which are alive and remain ſhall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air.* 7. Chriſt will own you, and crown you, and admit you into the Kingdom of Heaven, which he hath prepared for you. *Mat.* 25. 34. *Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World.* Here is ſtrong and active love indeed! and ſhall not the conſideration of this love of Chriſt raiſe and heighten your love unto him? ſhall it not provoke and excite you unto activity of love, unto the lively and moſt vigorous exerciſe thereof? hath Chriſt united himſelf to your nature; and ſhall not your Hearts be united to his perſon? hath he

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fulfilled all Righteousness for you; and will not you fulfil his command of Love? hath he endured such temptations, contradictions and sufferings upon your account, and given himself to dye for you; and will not you give your Hearts unto him? hath he risen from the dead, and ascended into Heaven for you; and will not your Affections arise from the Earth and ascend into Heaven, where Jesus Christ is? Doth he plead in Heaven with the Father for you; and will not you hearken to his pleadings, by his Word and Spirit with you for your love? is he preparing a glorious Mansion for you in his Fathers house; and will not you prepare a place for him, and entertain him in the inner room of your chiefest Affections? doth and will he keep you in his hand; and will not you embrace him in your bosoms? will he make all things work together for your good; and will not your Affections work towards him? will he stand by you in trouble and at Death; and will not this put life into your love? will he send his Angels to convey your souls into his presence, when separated from your Bodies; and shall not your Hearts get to him and lodge with him before? will he raise up your Bodies at the last day; and will not the hopes of this raise up your Affections?

fections? ſhall you be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the Air, and will Chriſt there own and crown you; and will not the believing fore-thoughts of this raviſh your Hearts with love to Chriſt, and tranſport you with unſpeakable joy? the ſtrength of Chriſt's love to you methinks ſhould engage your love for him, not only in the Truth of it, but alſo in the ſtrength of it.

4. Conſider, that Chriſt loveth you with the ſureſt love. Some Friends may love you a while with ſome kind of ſtrength and ardency, but ſuch differences may ariſe between you, as ſhall ſoon weaken and cool their love, and of Friends they ſhall prove ſtrangers, yea become Enemies unto you: or if their love doth abide, it is not ſure, becauſe they may not abide; if their Love dye not whilſt they live, they may ſoon dye, and then their love is at an end: but the love of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto you, is the moſt ſure love: if he begin to love you, he will continue to love you; if he love you once, he will love you to the end, or rather without end; the love of Chriſt is not ſubject to mutations and changes like unto ours; if you flag in your love, he will not fail in his love, and though you offend him, he is not irreconcileable; he may indeed upon

on unkindneſs on your ſide withdraw the manifeſtations of his love for a while, but he will never wholly remove his love from you, the love of Chriſt admits of no changing, knows no ending. Chriſtians, what motives can you find in any perſon, or any thing in the world which you have ſeen, comparable to thoſe which you have in this Lord Jeſus Chriſt, though you have never ſeen him? He is a Perſon moſt amiable in himſelf, his Greatneſs, his Holineſs, his Wiſdom, his Faithfulneſs, his Fulneſs, his Kindneſs, do make him ſhine with an admirable luſtre; his Relation to the Father, and the love which the Father doth bear to him; his Relation unto you, being your Shepherd, your Captain, your Teacher, your Advocate, your Soveraign, your Benefactor, your Brother, your Husband, your Redeemer, all theſe do commend him to your love; but when matchleſs beauty and lovelineſs do meet in a perſon that doth bear matchleſs love to you, when this moſt amiable Lord Jeſus doth love you with ſuch a free love, ſuch a cordial love, ſuch a ſtrong and active love, ſuch a ſure and conſtant love; when his love is incomparable, ſurpaſſing all other love, and incomprehenſible, ſurpaſſing all knowledge: O with what activity, ardour and conſtancy, ſhould you love ſo ſuitable an object!

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SECT. XIII.

THe third ſort of motives to excite your love unto Chriſt, may be drawn from the conſideration of Chriſts Beneſits. If you are true Chriſtians, you have, 1. Spiritual Light from Chriſt. 2. Spiritual Life from him. 3. The Pardon of ſin from him. 4. The Robes of Righteouſneſs from him. 5. The Peace of Conſcience from him. 6. The Joyes of the Holy Ghoſt from him. 7. The Riches of Grace from him. 8. The Dignity of Children from him. 9. The Spirit of Prayer from him. 10. Title to the Kingdom of Heaven, with the firſt Fruits and fore-taſtes of it from him here, and ſhall be put into the poſſeſſion of it by him hereafter.

1. You have Spiritual light from Chriſt; Chriſt is the Sun from whom all the beams of this light do come: time was when you were not only in the dark, but darkneſs; but Jeſus Chriſt did enlighten you, *Eph.* 5. 8. *For ye were ſometimes darkneſs, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as Children of the light:* It is Chriſt that hath turned you from darkneſs to light, that hath tranſlated you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light, he

he hath caused a marvellous light to shine into your minds, whereby he hath discovered to you the wonderful things of the Law, that thereby you might discern the odious nature of Sin; and whereby he hath discovered to you the wonderful mysteries of the Gospel, that thereby you might discern the excellency of Gospel-priviledges, and the exceeding Riches of Gods Grace and Kindness through Jesus Christ. Christ hath opened your Eyes to see the chiefest evil, that you might be delivered from it, and the chiefest good and happiness that you might attain unto it. And doth not this light which you have from Christ call for your love? If the man that was born blind, and was cured of his natural darkness by Christ, did love Christ for this favour, so as boldly to plead for him before the Pharisees, though he were for it cast out of the Synagogues, as you may read in *John* 9. How much more reason have you to love Christ, who hath cured you of your Spiritual darkness; which had it continued, you would have gone blindfold to Hell, where there is blackness of darkness for ever?

2. You have Spiritual life from Christ; you were Spiritually dead, and Christ hath quickned you; *Eph.* 2. 1. *You hath he quickned who were dead in sins and trespasses.*

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We read that Chriſt raiſed *Lazarus* from the dead after he had been buried four dayes, *John* 11. *Lazarus* did love Chriſt before, but no doubt this Reſurrection of him ſo wonderfully, did endear his love to Chriſt exceedingly; and ſhall not Chriſts raiſing you up from your Spiritual death, raiſe your Hearts unto a great height of love to Chriſt! you will greatly love one that is inſtrumental to ſave your natural life, when in great hazard and danger, eſpecially if he ſhould do it by venturing his own; and will you not greatly love Chriſt who hath given you Spiritual life, which is far more excellent than the life of Nature; and when he dyed that you might live, and when if you had not received this Spiritual life from him, you could not have eſcaped eternal Death?

3. You have the pardon of ſin from Chriſt; this Chriſt hath purchaſed for you, and the purchaſe hath coſt him dear, even his blood, which was of more worth than the treaſures, were there ſo many, of ten thouſand worlds: this Chriſt hath ſued out for you by his interceſſion at the right hand of God. Whilſt you were under the guilt of ſin, you were bound over by the Juſtice of God to ſuffer the vengeance of Eternal Fire; but being pardoned, your obligation

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to future punishments is taken off, and you are no more lyable to wrath to come, and the vengeance of Hell, than if you had never sinn'd. And will you not love the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath procured for you so great a Priviledge? We read of one that had much forgiven her, and she loved much, *Luk.* 7. 47. and have not you had much forgiven? have not your sins been very numerous, and very heinous? and hath Christ obtained the pardon of them all; and will not you love Christ much?

4. You have the Robes of Righteousness from Christ: you are born naked of Original Righteousness, and you could not work out any actual Righteousness for your selves that might cover your nakedness; whatever you wrought your selves, it was rags that could not cover you, and it was filthy rags which did pollute and defile you. Christ hath given you the Robes of his perfect Righteousness to cover and adorn you withall, and therein you are accepted as perfectly Righteous in the sight of God. O how should we love the Lord Jesus for this Garment; if your Bodies were naked, and one should give you cloaths to cover you, especially if they were rich cloaths, you would love such a person; and will you not love the Lord Jesus Christ, who

hath

hath given you a garment to cover your Souls, and that a very rich one, even the Robes of his moſt pure and unſpotted Righteouſneſs, which by Faith is put upon you?

5. You have peace of Conſcience from Chriſt: This is that peace which the Scripture telleth us *paſſeth all underſtanding*, *Phil.* 4. 7. It paſſeth all underſtanding to know the worth of it; ſuch as have this peace would not leave it upon any account, they would part with Eſtate, or Liberty, or Life, rather than part with their peace; and thoſe which have it not, but now do ſlight and neglect it, yet if they be awakened by the ſides of the Grave, and when they are come to the confines of Eternity, then they would value this peace, and would give all the world (were it at their diſpoſe) for it. This Jewel of peace you have from Jeſus Chriſt, he hath purchaſed it for you, the chaſtiſement of your peace was upon him, and he hath promiſed and bequeathed it in his laſt Will and Teſtament unto you; *John* 14. 27. *My Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you.* In his reconciling you unto God, he hath laid a Foundation for this peace in all you that are true believers; and if he have moreover ſpoken peace to you, in giving you well-grounded evidences of your Reconciliation;

on; if after raising a storm, he hath sent a calm into your Spirits, and given a sweet serenity unto you in the testimony of his Spirit to and with your spirits, that your peace is made with God, O how should this draw forth your love to Christ!

6. You have the Joyes of the Holy Ghost from Christ. We read of the *Thessalonians*, that they *received the Word in much Affliction, with Joy of the Holy Ghost*, 1 Thes. 1. 6. Such are those Joyes spoken of in the Text, which are *unspeakable and full of Glory*. These are not carnal Joyes but Spiritual, which are of a higher nature and sweeter relish, that have a higher object, and are the beginnings of Eternal Joyes; if you have these joyes in any measure, you have them from Christ; he sends the Holy Ghost from Heaven to be your Comforter, to fill your Hearts with Spiritual joyes, and shall not your hearts then be filled with love to the Lord Jesus who is the Author of them?

7. You have the riches of Grace from Christ: If any of you were poor and ready to starve with hunger and cold, and a rich man should give or send to you a chest full of Gold and Silver, or a Cabinet full of Jewels worth many thousand pounds; would you not love such a Benefactor? the Lord Jesus

Jeſus hath given you the riches of Grace, the leaſt meaſure of which is really of more worth than the vaſteſt treaſures of Gold, Silver and precious Stones, that ever was gathered together and heaped up by the moſt wealthy man that ever lived upon the face of the Earth; and will you not love Jeſus Chriſt who hath given you theſe inestimable riches?

8. You have the Dignity of Children from Chriſt; 1 *John* 3. 1. *Behold what manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God!* This Priviledge of Adoption is beſtowed upon you, not only by the Father, but alſo by the Son; *John* 1. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* We read of ſome raiſed from the duſt, and lifted up from the dunghil to ſit with Princes, *Pſal.* 113. 7, 8. It is a far higher advancement to be lifted up from the dunghill of ſin, and of ſlaves to luſts, and Children of the Devil, to be made the Sons and Daughters of the Lord Almighty. This honour have all the Saints, and it is Jeſus Chriſt who hath conferred this honour upon you; and will not this endear your love to Chriſt?

8. You have the Spirit of Prayer from Chriſt;

Christ; being Sons, the Spirit of the Son is sent down into your Hearts, whereby you are enabled to say *Abba Father*, Gal. 4. 6. through Christ you have access unto God by the Spirit, *Eph.* 2. 18. It is the Spirit of Christ which helpeth your infirmities in Prayer; that formeth your Petitions, that enableth you to Pray with Faith and Life, and Fervour. Through Christ you have free Admittance to the throne of Grace; through Christ you have Assistance by his Spirit to Pray in Prayer; through Christ you have Audience, and gracious returns; O how are you beholden unto Christ! and how should you love him!

10. You have a Title to the Kingdom of Heaven from Christ. Through Christ you are Children, and through Christ you are Heirs. It is Christ that gives the first Fruits of the Heavenly *Canaan*, the earnest of the future Treasure and Inheritance which he hath promised, and the foretastes sometimes of those Soul-ravishing Pleasures which the Saints shall have in Fulness, and to Eternity, when they are received up into Glory. And it is Christ that hereafter will give Possession unto you, of the Kingdom of Heaven. At the Day of his glorious appearance, after he hath owned you before the whole World of Angels and Men,

and

and honoured you to be his Aſſeſſors in his Judging and condemning the Wicked; he will receive you with Acclamations of Joy and triumph, into the Glorious Palace of the New *Jeruſalem*, where you ſhall have the Beatifical Viſion and Fruition of the glorious *Jehovah*, and be made partakers of ſuch glorious Felicity as hath not now entred into your Hearts to conceive. And will not the Conſideration of all this ſet your hearts on fire with love to Chriſt? Chriſtians, is there any Perſon like to Chriſt's Perſon? is there any love like to Chriſt's love? are there any Benefits like to Chriſt's benefits? No, no, he is incomparable in all; methinks then you ſhould by this time feel your love to Chriſt like Fire to burn within with a vehement flame; or methinks your love to Chriſt ſhould be like water, I mean the waters of the Sanctuary ſpoken of *Ezek.* 47. 3, 4, 5. which at entrance were but to the Ankles, a little further were up to the Loyns, a little further a deep River over the head, where a man might ſwim; methinks you ſhould perceive an encreaſing of your love under theſe various motives; if your love were more ſhallow at firſt, methinks by this time it ſhould have got ſome depth; when ſuch Winds do blow, the waters ſhould flow

and overflow, methinks your love to Christ should be raised unto a high tide, and run with a strong Stream. Thus for the motives drawn from the consideration of Christs Benefits, all which are so many Orators for your love.

SECTION XIV.

THe fourth and last sort of Motives to excite your love to Christ, may be drawn from the consideration of that love which Christians have, or should have unto him; and here consider, 1. The Duty. 2. The Priviledge. 3. The Honour. 4. The Wisdom. 5. The Excellency. 6. The Necessity. 7. The Usefulness. 8. The Delightfulness. 9. The Attainableness of this love to Jesus Christ.

1. Consider, it is your Duty to love Christ; if it be your Duty to have a Natural affection unto Parents and Children, it is much more your Duty to have spiritual affections unto Christ; If it be your duty to have conjugal affection unto your Earthly Husband and Wife; it is a greater duty to have conjugal love unto this your Heavenly Husband. If it be your Duty to love Brethren,

Brethren, Sisters and Kindred, that love you, it is a greater Duty to love Jesus Christ, who loves you above all Relations; if it be your Duty to love your Enemies, it is much more your Duty to love Christ who is your best Friend. It is the will of your Heavenly Father that you should love Christ; the Devil would have you hate him, but God would have you love him, and whether it be most reason that you should obey the Will of God or the Will of the Devil, judge ye. It is the Will of Christ that you should love him; the will of the flesh is against this love, but whose will ought you to comply withall? you are not Debtors to the Flesh that you should obey it's commands, neither are you Debtors to any Creatures to give them your choicest affections, but you are debtors unto Christ to give him your chief love: Christ hath most right to your love, and will you not give to Christ his due? if you are bound to give men their due, are you not much more bound to give unto Christ his due? Christs due is your best, and have you any thing better than your Hearts to present him withall? will Christ accept of any thing at your hands, should you withhold from him your Hearts? had you thousands of Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oyl to

offer to him, had you all the Treasures of the Earth at your dispose, and should lay it down all at his feet, it would be all slighted and disregarded by him, if you give away your Hearts from him.

2. Consider, it is your Priviledge that you may love Christ, that Christ will give you leave to do it, and kindly accept of your Love. Should Beggars fall in love with Princes in order to the Marriage Union, both their Persons and Love would be rejected with scorn, anger and disdain: There is a far greater distance between you and Jesus Christ, than there is between the highest Prince and the meanest Beggar; and yet the Lord Jesus Christ doth give you leave to love him with a Spiritual conjugal love, in order to the neareſt Spiritual Union and Conjuction; and notwithstanding his greatness and your meanness, he is not ashamed to give entertainment unto your Love; although you are so mean as Creatures, and have been so vile as Sinners, yet he doth not scorn and disdain you, but both Persons and Love may find ready acceptance with him. It is your duty to love Christ because he commands you, and it is your Priviledge that you may love Christ because he allows you to do it.

3. Consi-

3. Conſider, it is your Honour to Love Chriſt. The real Honour of any is not the Noble Blood which runs in their veins, the high lineage from whence they are deſcended, the great Titles with which they are Inveſted, or the moſt eminent Earthly dignities unto which they are advanced: The Heathen could ſay, *Et Genus & Proavos, & quæ non fecimus ipſi vix ea noſtra voco*; our Stock and noble Anceſtors, and what we have not done or deſerved our ſelves, we can hardly call our own. And *Virtus ſola & unica Nobilitas*: Vertue is the only true Nobility. And the Scripture telleth us, that *the vileſt Men are exalted*, Pſal. 12. 8. and *that the moſt high ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will, and ſeteth up over it the baſeſt of Men*, Dan. 4. 17. Princes and Nobles by their Vices and Wickedneſſes may render themſelves more vile than the Earth under their Feet, more baſe than the mire in the Streets. The Word of God accounteth only them to be truly Honourable, that are truly gracious; and this Grace of Love to Jeſus Chriſt doth put a great honour and luſtre upon all thoſe that have it. There is no greater and higher object for your love than the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, a perſon of ſo great eminency and excellency: the Love of Chriſt

doth ennoble the Heart, and none in the world have ſuch truly great and generous Souls, as thoſe who have the greateſt love to him. According to the Spirit, ſo is the Man, either, baſe or honourable; and according to the chief love, ſo is the Spirit; if your Hearts do chiefly love any inferiour things, as all ſublunary things are; hereby you are debaſed and diſhonoured; if your Heart chiefly love Chriſt, who is a Superior good and ſuperlatively amiable, hereby you are dignified and become truly honourable. We read of Hope (that is the Grace of Hope) that *it maketh not aſhamed*, Rom. 5. 5. And the ſame may be ſaid of this Grace of Love to Jeſus Chriſt, it maketh not aſhamed. The moſt in the World do love thoſe things which one time or other will make them aſhamed; the covetous will be aſhamed of their love of Riches, and the voluptuous will be aſhamed of their Love of Pleaſures, and the Ambitious will be aſhamed of their love of Honours; diſappointment of Happineſs and true contentment will make all aſhamed of their inordinate Creature-love, eſpecially when they come to reap the bitter Fruit of their Sin in their Everlaſting puniſhment. *Rom.* 16. 21. *What Fruit had you then in thoſe things whereof you are now aſhamed,*

aſhamed, for the end of thoſe things is Death. But the love of Chriſt maketh not aſhamed, it is no matter of diſhonour, and therefore neither is nor will be matter of ſhame for any to love Jeſus Chriſt with the greateſt Strength and Ardency: if the wicked do deſpiſe and ſcorn Gods people, upon the account of this love, their ſcorns are their real Glory, as on the contrary their eſteem of any upon the account of ſin, is a real ſhame and diſhonour.

4. Conſider, it is your Wiſdom to love Chriſt, *Deut.* 4. 6. *Keep therefore and do them, for this is your Wiſdom and Underſtanding in the ſight of the Nations, which ſhall hear theſe Statutes, and ſay, Surely this great Nation is a Wiſe and Underſtanding People.* None have ſuch Wiſdom and Underſtanding as thoſe who have and keep this Statute and Commandment to love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: *Pſal.* 111. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wiſdom, a good Underſtanding have all they that do his Commandments.* The fear of the Lord and the love of Chriſt are alwayes in conjuction, or rather the former doth include the latter; this is the beginning and chief part of Wiſdom, and thoſe have the greateſt Underſtandings, who have the ſtrongeſt Affecti-

ons to the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of Christ is the most reasonable, and therefore the most wise love. That love is most reasonable, which is chiefly carryed forth towards that object which is most suitable and really most amiable; none so suitable and amiable an object as the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears in what hath been already said concerning Christs Person, Christs Love, and Christs Benefits. Such as love other persons or things with a chief love, they are mistaken in the objects of their love, they apprehend more excellency and desireableness in them, than really is in them, and so their love is a foolish love and unreasonable, there being nothing really worthy of it, nothing really amiable in the chief place beneath and besides Christ. Such as make choice of Christ for the object of their chief love, they make the wisest choice, there are really those excellencies in him which they apprehend, and beyond what they can possibly apprehend and conceive. They are fools that are slow of Heart to love Christ, and they are most wise that are most forward unto this love. It is your Wisdom to love Christ chiefly, and to love Christ ardently, such Wisdom as will make your faces shine in the Eyes of good men, and which will put a lustre upon your Spirits in the

the Eyes of God: True Wiſdom doth not conſiſt in the invention of curious and quaint Notions, in the framing ſound and rational Deductions, in uttering the ſence of the mind in neat and florid Expreſſions; but the chief Wiſdom doth lie in the right placing of the Affections, and none have attained ſo high a pitch of true Spiritual Wiſdom, as thoſe that have attained the higheſt pitch of love to Jeſus Chriſt. It is matter of great wonder, when there is the greateſt reaſon and the ſtrongeſt arguments for the love of Chriſt, that Men of the greateſt parts and learning, who have heard of Chriſt, do not readily fall in love with him, and attain higher degrees of this love, than others of a more inferior capacity: But the Scripture muſt be fulfilled, *Mat.* 11. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.* Such of you as are but Babes in worldly Wiſdom and humane Learning, as have but mean natural parts, and no improvement by education, yet if you love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt above all perſons and things in the World, you are far more Wiſe than the greateſt Scholars that are without this love.

5. Consider the excellency of this Love unto Jesus Christ; as the Knowledge of Christ is the most excellent Knowledge, *Phil.* 3.8. *Yea doubtless I count all things but loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:* So the Love of Christ is the most excellent love. It is a love of the most excellent object, the Lord Jesus who is so excellent; it is a love of the most excellent original, it cometh down from Heaven, it is wrought by the Spirit of God; it is a love that renders them most excellent that have it. The wicked that are without this love, are like dross; the Righteous that have it, are like Gold; the Wicked that hate Christ, are like dirt; the Righteous that love him, are like Jewels; other loves do darken and defile, the love of Christ doth brighten the Spirit, and renders Men truly illustrious, and the excellent of the Earth.

6. Consider the Necessity of this Love unto Jesus Christ.

1. The love of Christ is universally necessary: some of you have need to do this thing, and others of you have need to do that; but all of you have the greatest need to love Christ: some of you have need of this Friend, and to love him, that you may

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keep him, and others of you have need of another Friend; one Friend cannot serve the necessities of all; but all of you have need of Christ for your Friend: he is the only Friend that can serve all your necessities, and you have need to love him above all Friends; it is necessary that you who are poor should love Christ, who have but few or no Friends; and it is necessary that you who are rich should love Christ, who have many Friends; Christ being a Friend instead of all to them that have none, and better than all to them that have the most.

2. The love of Christ is absolutely and indispensibly necessary: it is not necessary that you should climb up into a high seat of dignity and honour; but it is absolutely necessary that your affections should climb up and ascend to Jesus Christ who is above; it is not necessary that you should abound in wealth, that you should have full bags, and full cofsers, and much riches in your houses, but it is absolutely necessary that you should have the Riches of this Grace of love to Jesus Christ in your Hearts. Food is not so necessary to satisfie your hunger, cloaths are not so necessary to cover your nakedness, houses are not so necessary to shelter you from the injury of the Weather; the

most

most needful thing is not so necessary to your bodies, as this love to Jesus Christ is necessary to your Souls. You may be poor and in the lowest condition here on Earth, and yet be truly happy whilst you live, and Eternally happy in the other world, if you have this love to Jesus Christ; but without this love, whatever your Riches, and Honours, and Friends, your Earthly delights and enjoyments be, though never so desirable, never so plentiful, yet you are miserable, and shall be miserable. You may love other Persons, and Things in the world subordinately, but you must love Jesus Christ chiefly, otherwise you are under the curse both of the Law and Gospel, and you cannot escape the vengeance of Hell.

7. Consider the Usefulness of this Love unto Jesus Christ.

1. The love of Christ is useful in Prosperity, to ballast the Heart, that it be not overset with the full gales of a flourishing condition: it is of use to moderate the affections to lawful things; and it is of use to keep the Heart from unlawful and sinful loves; if Christ have not your Hearts, some base and foolish lusts will have them, which will wound your Consciences with guilt, and pierce your Hearts thorow with many sorrows.

2. The

2. The love of Chriſt is uſeful in Adverſity, to bear up the Heart from ſinking and being overwhelmed with the Winds and Waves of trouble and affliction; it is of uſe to eſtabliſh the Heart from being extraordinarily moved in the moſt Stormy times: not only Faith but Love too is of a fixing nature, to keep from amazing fears of evil tidings, and the greateſt perils; and of a ſtrengthning Nature, to ſtay and ſupport the Spirit, and keep off preſſing griefs and deſpondencies, in the darkeſt and moſt doleful days.

3. The love of Chriſt is uſeful to quicken and excite unto duty, this makes the yoak of Chriſt eaſie, and will enable you to draw chearfully therein; this makes the burden of duty (ſo accounted by the moſt,) to be no burden in eſteem; if you have much love unto Chriſt you will account duty to be your priviledge, and the Service of Chriſt to be freedom, and none of his commands will be grievous, but all of them joyous unto you; if you have much love unto Chriſt, your Hearts will be enflamed hereby with zeal for your Maſters Glory, and you will never think you can do too much for him.

4. The love of Chriſt is uſeful to arm

you

you against Temptations. If Faith be a Shield, Love to Christ is a Breast plate against the sharpest Darts which the Devil can throw at you; love to Christ doth garrison your Hearts against this Enemy, and is a strong defence against any overtures which the Devil may make in his Temptations to draw you to sin: how can I do this evil and offend my dear Lord, will be the answer of love to repell temptations to sin, whatever alluring proffers they be accompanied withal. Temptations will have no force to prevail over you, if this love of Christ be strong within you.

5. The love of Christ is useful to fit you for the cross, and the greatest sufferings which you may be called unto for the sake of Christ. If you have great love to Christ, you will be ready to suffer for Christ with patience and with chearfulness; the heavieſt cross will seem light, disgrace and shame will be accounted honour, losses will be esteemed gains, pains pleasures, or at least priviledges: Prisons will seem Palaces, and death will be accounted life! O how have some run to the stake, and embraced the Flames of Fire kindled to burn them, when they have felt the fire of love to Christ burning strongly within them! Thus this love is useful in Life.

6. The

6. The love of Chriſt is uſeful at Death. This love in its ſtrength will put a beauty upon the aſpect of death, which ſeems ſo grim and terrible unto the moſt. If you have much love to Chriſt, you will look upon death as Chriſts meſſenger, ſent for you to bring you out of the dark Priſon of the World and the Body, and to convey you into the Manſions of Glory, where your dear Lord is, and you will not be unwilling to leave the World that you may live with Chriſt.

8. Conſider the ſweetneſs of this love unto Chriſt. If there be ſweetneſs in the love of the Members, there is much more ſweetneſs in the love of the head; if there be delight and comfort in the love of Chriſts diſciples for their Maſters ſake, there is much more delight and comfort in the love of Chriſt himſelf the Maſter for his own ſake; the Apoſtle telleth us of comfort in love, *Phil.* 2. 1. that is in the love one of another, but the conſolations in the love of Chriſt are far exceeding; there are no ſuch ſweet motions of Heart, as thoſe of the ſtrong and fervent outgoings of it in its love to Chriſt, eſpecially when Chriſt doth draw near and manifeſt his love unto the Soul. Chriſt doth rejoyce in his love unto his Diſciples,

and

and they may rejoyce in their love to him, and this joy in the love of Christ is a full joy: *John* 15.11. *These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full:* In the former verse Christ speaketh of his love to them, and here of his joy in them; they were the objects of his joy as they were the objects of his love, and according to the measure and strength of their love to Christ, so is the fulness of their joy in Christ. *Cant.* 4. 9. *Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse, thou hast ravished my Heart with one of thine Eyes, with one Chain of thy Neck;* They are the words of Christ the Beloved, unto his Spouse the Church, expressing the ravishing delight which he found in her looks of Faith, or glances of Love, and the chain of Graces which she was adorned withall. How then may your Hearts be ravished with unspeakable delight in looking upon Christs most amiable face, and in the fervent actings of your love unto him? when a glance of his Eye, a smile, a beam from his countenance, doth enkindle a Fire in the breast, and this fire of love to Christ doth burn and flame; O how sweet is this flame, beyond what tongue is able to express.

9. And lastly, Consider the Attainable-

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neſs of this love to Chriſt. Bruits are not capable of this love to Chriſt, but you are capable: as your minds are capable of knowing him, ſo your hearts are capable of loving him. Others have attained this love who were as much without it, and as much averſe unto it, as any of you may be. Here you are capable, hereafter if you live and dye without it, you will be utterly uncapable. You have now the means of Grace, and as of other Graces, ſo of this Grace of love to Chriſt, in the diligent uſe of the means you may attain thereunto. Thus I have done with the Motives to excite you unto the love of Chriſt.

SECTION XV.

THe ſecond thing propounded in the Proſecution of the uſe of Exhortation, was to give Directions, and the Directions will be of two ſorts. 1. How to attain this love to Chriſt. 2. Wherein to ſhow this love to Chriſt. Firſt, How to attain this love to Chriſt; and here I ſhall, 1. Direct you how you may attain this love to Chriſt in the truth of it, where you are wholly without it. 2. Direct you how to attain much of this love to Chriſt, where you have

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it but in a low degree and weak measure. The first directions then shall be, How you that are Graceless, and Christless, and wholly without this love to Christ, may attain this love to Christ.

1. If you would attain this love unto Jesus Christ whom you have never seen, you must get a thorow perswasion that there is such a Person as Jesus Christ, and that he is such a Person indeed as the Scriptures have revealed him to be. The reason why Heathens and Infidels are without love to Christ is because they have never heard of him; and the reason why many nominal Christians that have heard of Christ are without love to him, is because they are not really perswaded that there is or ever was such a person as Jesus Christ in the World. If you would attain this love, you must give firm assent to this Truth (which is the greatest of all, and the very pillar and foundation of the whole Christian Religion) that Christ really is, and that the History of him is no cunningly devised Fable. If you have reason to believe that there was such a Person as *Alexander* the Great, that there was such a person as *Julius Cæsar*, both which lived before Christs time; you have more reason to believe that there was and is such a Person

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as Jeſus Chriſt; you have only Prophane hiſtory for the former, but you have Sacred hiſtory for the latter; you have only the writings of men to teſtifie the one, but you have the word of God in the Holy Scripture to teſtifie the other. You have as much reaſon to believe the hiſtory of the Goſpel as to believe any other hiſtory, and you have more reaſon to believe the hiſtory of the Goſpel than to believe any other hiſtory. I ſhall ſuggeſt one reaſon amongſt many that might be mentioned. The Hiſtory of the Goſpel was written by unlearned Fiſhermen, and it was believed by as learned men as any in the world, in and near the time of their writing, which belief ſome of them ſealed with their blood, which they would never have done had they found any reaſon to ſuſpect the truth of this hiſtory, which (had there been any reaſon of ſuſpition) they might eaſily have found out in thoſe times, when ſuch a grand Fable as this (had it been a Fable) could not poſſibly have gained credit amongſt wiſe and inquiſitive men; eſpecially when it would have been their greateſt worldly Intereſt, the preſervation of their Eſtates and Lives, to have disbelieved and diſowned it. If, beſide the Apoſtles, all the learned Fathers (whoſe works are extant amongſt us, who lived near the Apoſtles

ſtles times, and ſome of whom ſuffered Martyrdom for Chriſt's ſake) did ſee reaſon to believe that there was ſuch a Perſon as Chriſt, ſurely you have reaſon to believe and no ſolid reaſon to diſcredit the report of him in the Hiſtory of the Goſpel. And when you have attained a firm Aſſent unto this, get a full perſwaſion that Jeſus Chriſt is ſuch a perſon as the Scriptures do record and teſtifie him to be. Be perſwaded of his Amiableneſs, his Greatneſs, his Holineſs, his Wiſdom, his Faithfulneſs, his Fulneſs, his Kindneſs, the Relation he ſtands in to the Father, his only begotten and dearly beloved Son; the Relation he ſtandeth in to his People, eſpecially in his Offices of *Prophet*, *Prieſt* and *King*, as I have ſet him forth in the Motives to ſtir up Love: acquaint your ſelves with the Hiſtory of his Birth ſo Wonderful, of his Life ſo Holy, of his Works ſo Powerful, of his Doctrine ſo Heavenly, of his Sufferings ſo Great, of his Death ſo Painful and yet ſo Voluntary, of his Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, Seſſion and Interceſſion at the right hand of God, ſo needful for us, as you have this Hiſtory upon record in the New Teſtament: the aſſent to this in your Minds will be a preparative for the attaining of true Love to Jeſus Chriſt in your Hearts.

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2. If you would attain true Love unto Jeſus Chriſt, you muſt get *Conviction of Sin*, and a *ſenſe* of your Need of Chriſt. The prevailing love and liking of Sin is inconſiſtent with true love unto Jeſus Chriſt; ſuch as love Chriſt do hate Sin, and ſuch as love ſin have an Enmity againſt Chriſt: Whileſt your hearts go after your Covetouſneſs, or your Voluptuouſneſs, or are ſet upon any other Wickedneſs, your hearts cannot be ſet upon Chriſt; before you can love Chriſt, your hearts muſt be taken off from ſin. Get therefore a conviction of Sin, as the greateſt Evil in the world. Be perſwaded what an evil thing and a bitter it is, to tranſgreſs Gods Law, and thereby to affront the higheſt Majeſty, the great King of Glory. Look into the Word and Law of God, and ſee what is there required, what is there forbidden, and then look back upon your Lives, or look into the Regiſter of your Conſciences, that you may find out what your ſins of Omiſſion and Commiſſion have been. Take a view of your tranſgreſſions of the Law, and of your diſobedience alſo unto the Goſpel; and as you are guilty before God, ſo labour for a clear ſight and deep ſenſe of your Guilt, how you are under the Curſe of your Diſobedience, how you

you are liable to ruine and eternal destruction for your sins. Look upon sin as the most mischievous thing in the world; if there be any evil in any temporal calamities which ever did befall any of the children of men, yea if there be any evil in future miseries, in the extremity and eternity of Hells Plagues and Punishments, be perswaded that there is far more evil in sin which is the cause of all. Think how miserable you are whilest under the guilt and reigning power of sin, that the Worm is not so vile, that the Toad is not so full of deadly Poyson, that the filth of the Earth is not comparable unto the filth of your sins. Think how base and disingenuous you have been, how monstruously ingrateful to your Maker and Benefactor, what Traitors and Rebels you have been to your Supream King and Soveraign. Think what peril and danger continually you are in of Death and Hell, how weak the thred of Life is which ties Soul and Body together, which may be suddenly cut when you are least aware, when you are most secure; and then if you be found in a Christless state, your Souls will be conveyed immediately unto a place of remedileſs and eternal misery. Be perswaded that you are undone irrecoverably, unless the *Lord Jesus Christ* do help you; that you are lost for ever, unless

less the Lord Jesus Christ do save you; that you cannot escape the dreadful Vengeance of God, but must be tormented most horridly and everlastingly, amongst the Devils and the damned in Hell, unless the Lord Jesus Christ do deliver you from the Wrath which is to come. The sight and sense of sin, your miserable condition thereby, and of your indispensible need of Christ, will make way for your Love of him. If any of you were in debt many thousand pounds unto a severe Creditor, and had not one penny to discharge it, and you were threatned by him to be thrown into Prison, where you must lye and rot, and starve and dye, without hopes of relief or release, except you could make payment of the debt: And if you should hear of such a Rich man that were willing and did proffer to be your Surety, and to pay all for you; surely you would have an endeared Love to such a friend and Benefactor: Your sins are debts beyond the vastest summe of Money that ever was ow'd or pay'd, and you are not able to pay one farthing, to give the least satisfaction unto God, unto whom you are indebted; and God is severe, and strictly just, and without full satisfaction to his Justice, he will throw you into a worse Prison than the most nasty doleſom Prison on Earth,

I mean into the Prison of Hell, where you must lye without the least relief, or any hopes of release: The Lord Jesus Christ proffers to be your Surety, to pay off all for you, and to give you a full discharge; were you sensible what a debt Sin is, and what a Prison Hell is, surely it would work your hearts unto an endeared Love of such a Friend and surety, who alone can keep you out of this doleſome dreadful Prison, into which without him you will certainly and may suddenly be thrown. If any of you were sick of a Death-threatning distemper, and you had made use of many Physicians, but none could do you good; and if you should hear of one Physician who could assuredly and would readily and freely cure your Disease, and save your Life; surely you would thankfully make use of this Physician, and his kindness would exceedingly engage your Love; Sin is the Souls sickness, you are sick unto death, Sin when it is finished will bring forth Death, not only Temporal but Eternal: It is the Lord Jesus Christ only that can cure you of this deadly Sickness, that can remove your Sin, and thereby deliver you from this Death of Deaths: Get a sense of the dangerous sickness of Sin, and you will prize and use and love the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only

only Phyſician of value in this caſe. If any of you were guilty of Murder, or Theft, or High Treaſon, or any other heinous breach of the Law of the Land, for which you were apprehended, arraigned, accuſed, and condemned to be Hanged or Burned, or to a more tormenting Death than either; and if you ſhould hear of a Prince at Court that had begg'd the Pardon of ſuch Crimes, for ſuch Malefactors, and had obtained, and he ſhould ſend to you to ſignifie his willingneſs to do the like for you; ſurely you would thankfully accept of ſuch a proffer, and would love this Prince as your life, who ſhould thus preſerve you from Death: You are all guilty of high Treaſon and Rebellion againſt the King of Heaven, in your breach of his Law, and you are condemned by this Law, not to be hanged for it, or beheaded, but to be burn'd for it, to be burn'd in the Fire of Hell, which is unquenchable; The Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the Prince of Glory, a Friend in the Court of Heaven, who hath procured a Pardon for many ſuch malefactors, and ſendeth to you to ſignifie his willingneſs to procure your Pardon, if you will make uſe of him; Surely, if you have a ſenſe of your Crime and Danger, you will apply your ſelves unto Chriſt to

ſave you, and you will not withhold your Love from ſuch a one as ſhould ſhew you ſuch unparallel'd Favour.

3. If you would attain true Love unto Chriſt, you muſt get an Intereſt in Chriſt: you muſt lay hold on Chriſt by Faith, that you may be united to him, and related to him. It is Faith that works Love, to them that believe Chriſt is precious, but by Unbelievers he is ſlighted, and cannot be beloved. Without Union to Chriſt you will have no affection to Chriſt. The foundation of Love is laid in the Relation to the beloved; and this Union to and Intereſt in Chriſt, it is only by Faith. If then you would embrace Chriſt in the arms of your Love, you muſt firſt lay hold on Chriſt, and receive him by the hand of Faith. Whatever Motives and Attractives of Love there be in Jeſus Chriſt, they will be none to you without this Intereſt and Relation. Chriſt is a perſon moſt beautiful, moſt lovely and amiable; but he will not be ſo in your eyes, ſo long as you are without the eye of Faith; he is great and powerful, but ſo much the worſe for you, becauſe without Intereſt in him, his power is engaged againſt you: he is pure and holy, and whileſt in your ſins you are therefore

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the more odious in his ſight; he is wiſe and knoweth all things, therefore is privy to all your ſins; he is moſt true, and therefore will fulfil his threatnings againſt ſuch as go on ſtill in their treſpaſſes; he is full, but you without Intereſt in his Perſon have no ſhare in his fulneſs; he is kind, but it is to thoſe that are related to him, but what is this to you that are Unbelievers? he is a Shepheard to his Sheep, but you are Goats; he is a Captain to his Souldiers, but you are Enemies; he is a Teacher to his Diſciples, but you are the Devils Scholars: he is a Gracious Soveraign, but it is to his Subjects, you are Rebels: He is a Prieſt to his People, having made ſatisfaction and doth make interceſſion for them; but you trample his blood under your feet: He is a Friend and Benefactor to his People, but you are ſtrangers; he is a Brother, and a Husband to his People, but you ſtand in none of theſe Relations; he is a Redeemer to his People, but you are Slaves and Captives.

The light which he gives is moſt ſweet, but you are darkneſs; the life which he imparts is moſt excellent, but you are dead in ſins and treſpaſſes; he gives pardon of ſin, but you are under guilt; he gives Peace

of Conſcience, but your Conſciences are ſtill wounded and ſeared; he gives the Joys of the Holy Ghoſt, but you are in danger of Eternal woes; the Robes of his Righteouſneſs are moſt Rich, but you are naked; the Riches of his Grace are ineſtimable, but you are ſtill poor; the dignity of being made the Sons of God is moſt admirable, but you are Children of the Devil; he gives acceſs unto God in prayer, but you are ſtill at a diſtance; he gives a Title to the Kingdom of Heaven, but if you continue in your preſent ſtate, you will be ſhut at laſt out of the Palace which is above, and be thruſt down into the Priſon of Hell which is below. What then are all theſe motives to draw forth love to Chriſt unto you, that have no intereſt in Chriſt? it is Union and Relation unto Chriſt, and intereſt in him by Faith, which puts life into theſe motives, that they may indeed attract love; O then be perſwaded without further delay to endeavour after this intereſt in Chriſt; you muſt have it, or you are loſt irrecoverably, you will be miſerable Eternally; and you may attain this intereſt, others have attain'd it, as mean, and as vile as your ſelves, and you are called unto Chriſt. O be perſwaded then to come unto Chriſt, and joyn your ſelves by Faith

Faith unto him, that you may have intereſt in Chriſt and in all his Benefits. If you ask me what this Faith is that gives an intereſt in Chriſt, what it is to believe; I anſwer out of *John* 1. 12. that it is to receive Chriſt. *But to as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his Name.* Be perſwaded then to receive Chriſt and accept of him upon the terms of the Goſpel. Receive and take hold of Chriſt by the hand of Faith. And that you may do this, 1. You muſt let go your hold of ſin: if you hugg ſin in your boſom, if you harbour baſe Luſts in your Hearts, you cannot receive and give entertainment to Chriſt there: you muſt thruſt ſin out, if you would let Chriſt in. 2. You muſt let go your hold on the World; I don't ſay you muſt let it go out of your hands, and throw away the eſtates which God hath given, except it be to part with ſome proportion in a way of Mercy and Charity, and except you be called to leave all rather than to forgo Chriſt or any of his Truths; but you muſt let the World go out of your Hearts: the World muſt not ſit upon the Throne of your Hearts, that ſeat muſt be reſerved for Chriſt; chief love, and inordinate love to the world and things in the World, muſt be taken off. 3. You muſt

let go hold of self; your own Righteousness and all self-confidences must be parted with; you must be humbled and emptied of your selves, if you would be prepared for the receiving of Jesus Christ, and receiving of that fulness which there is in him. And then 1. Receive Jesus Christ as your High-Priest to reconcile you unto God, trusting alone in his Merits and Mediation. 2. Receive Jesus Christ as your Prophet to instruct and lead you in all Truth by his Word and Spirit. 3. Receive Jesus Christ as your Soveraign Lord and King to Rule you. 4. Receive Jesus Christ as your Captain to tread down your Spiritual Enemies under your feet. 5. Receive Jesus Christ in all his Relations, of Shepherd, Friend, Brother, and especially in the Relation of an Husband; and joyn your selves to him, and make over your selves to him, dedicating and devoting your selves to him, and giving up your selves to be guided, guarded, provided for, and governed by him. This is to receive Christ, and this is to believe, this gives Union and Relation, and interest in the Lord Jesus: and if you do thus joyn your selves to Christ by Faith, you will quickly feel love to Christ to spring forth, to work and act, and that vigorously; and to bring forth such fruit in the life, as shall evidently shew

ſhew that love to Chriſt is rooted in the Heart.

4. If you would attain Truth of love to Jeſus Chriſt, be diligent in the uſe of all thoſe means which God hath appointed for the working of it. I ſhall inſtance only in two means.

1. Be diligent in Hearing the Word Preached. As Faith cometh by Hearing, ſo love to Chriſt is wrought by the ſame means; *Hear and your Souls ſhall live*, ſaith the Prophet, *Iſa.* 55. 3. and I may ſay, hear that your Hearts may love, that where the Eye cannot, the Ears may affect the Heart with love to the Lord Jeſus. Whilſt *Lydia* was hearing *Paul* preach, her Heart was opened, *Act.* 16. 14. and whilſt you are hearing Miniſters preach of Chriſt, your Hearts may be opened to receive him, and to embrace him in the arms of your deareſt love. See *Act.* 11. 15. *As I began to ſpeak, the Holy Ghoſt fell on them, as on us at the beginning.* Whilſt *Peter* was preaching and the Gentiles were hearing, the Holy Ghoſt was ſent down from Heaven and fell upon them; and ſo whilſt you are hearing the Word, God may give forth of his Spirit to work this Grace of love to Jeſus Chriſt in your Hearts.

2. Be diligent and earneſt in Prayer unto God for this love, confeſs and bewail before him your want of this love, tell him you deſerve a double *Anathema*, becauſe you do not love Chriſt, and withall tell him you cannot of your ſelves love him, that you can as eaſily lift a Mountain to Heaven, as lift up your Hearts unto Chriſt; but deſire that he would draw up your love to Chriſt by his Spirit. Beg of him that he would put out the fire of Luſt, and all inordinate creature-love, and that he would enkindle a fire of love in you to this moſt lovely Jeſus, which no corruption in your Hearts may be able to extinguiſh. And in your prayers preſent your Hearts to the Lord Jeſus, offer them up freely to him, and deſire that he would accept of them, that he would take hold of them, and take poſſeſſion of them, and erect his Throne in them, and make them an Everlaſting habitation for himſelf.

SECTION XVI.

HAving given directions how you may attain the Truth of love to Chriſt where you are without it, I come now to give directions how you may attain much of

of this love to Christ; where you have it but in a low degree and weak measure. Would you attain much Love to Christ?

1. Be much in Contemplation of Christ; consider often what motives there are of love in him, press them upon your Spirits, and labour to awaken and rouze up your Hearts unto the vigorous exercise of this love. Spend time in secret retirement, and there think, and think again, of the Superlative Excellencies and Perfections which are in Christs person, how wonderful and matchless his love is, what heights in it that cannot be reached, what depths in it that cannot be fathomed, what other dimensions which cannot be comprehended; Meditate often of his benefits, how incomparable his love-tokens be: and whilst you are musing, you may feel the fire burning: whilst you are looking, you may feel your Hearts leaping; whilst you are taking a view of him, e're you are aware, your Hearts, like the Chariots of *Amminadab*, may run to him: O the ravishments of love! the transports of Soul, which some Believers have found in their retired thoughts and views of Christ! Get often into the Mount of Divine Contemplation, and there look upwards unto Heaven, and think with your-

ſelves: *Yonder, Yonder, above the ſhining Sun is the more Glorious Son of Righteouſneſs; there at the right hand of the Throne of God, is my beloved Jeſus the Son of God ſeated; and though he be ſo high above me both in place and dignity, yet he thinketh upon me and pleadeth for me, and many a gift hath he ſent thence and by his Spirit conveyed unto me: and I can ask nothing of the Father in his name, but, if it be really for my good, I have it by his means. O dear Jeſus, how lovely art thou in thy ſelf! the darling of Heaven! the Delight of the Father! the Admiration of Angels! O what brightneſs of Glory, what ſhining luſtre art thou arrayed with! thou art cloathed with moſt excellent Majeſty and Honour: thou art girded with infinite Might and Power; the beauty of thy face is moſt wonderful: the ſmiles of thy countenance are moſt ſweet and delightful: And doth this lovely fair One, this faireſt of ten thouſand, this moſt excellent and altogether lovely Perſon, bear a particular love to me? to ſuch a vile worm as me? to ſuch a dead Dog as me? to ſuch an undeſerving, ill-deſerving, hell-deſerving ſinner as me? O what marvellous kindneſs is this! what infinite Riches of Free Grace! doth he know me by name? hath he given himſelf for me? and given himſelf to me? and ſhall not I give him*

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my heart? Am I written in his book, Redeemed with his blood, cloathed with his Righteouſneſs, beautified with his Image? Hath he put the dignity of a Child of God upon me, and prepared a place in the Fathers houſe for me? O wonderful! O admirable! what ſhall I render? what returns ſhall I make? had I a thouſand tongues, ſhould I not employ them all in ſpeaking his praiſe? had I a thouſand Hearts ſhould I not preſent them all as too mean a thank-offering unto him? And yet am I ſlow, ſlow of Heart to love this dear and ſweet Jeſus? Awake O my Soul! awake from thy dulneſs and ſtupidity? ſhake off thy ſleep which glues thine eye-lids ſo cloſe together; ſhake out the duſt of the Earth which hath got into thine eyes, and keeps thee from the view of thy beloved. Ariſe O my Soul! and lift up thy ſelf, unfetter thy feet, unclog thy ſelf, take the wing and mount up above the ſky and viſible Heavens, even to the place where the lovely and dear Jeſus is. Take thy leave of the world, and all things therein. Bid farewel to the flattering honours, the deceitful Riches, the glozing Pleaſures, that are here below: bid adieu to them, and leave them to thoſe that place their chiefeſt happineſs in them. If Earth hath thy body for a while, yet let it have thy heart and chiefeſt affections no more; come, O my Soul, aſcend and ſoar

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aloft unto the Heaven of Heavens, the way unto the Holy of Holies is acceſſible, the vail is rent, the fore-runner is entred, and thou mayeſt have entrance too with thy Thoughts, and Deſires, and Loves, and Hopes, and Joyes; there thou mayſt ſee and view, and admire, and embrace thy deareſt Lord; there thy Heart may find a fit object for it's Love, even thy deareſt Lord Jeſus, who will not reject and deſpiſe thee, but give kind entertainment unto thy love, and withall give the fulleſt and ſweeteſt returns; there thy Heart may find a room to diſpoſe of it ſelf, and not only a lodging like that of a wayfaring man for a night, but an habitation wherein to dwell and to take up it's Eternal abode; let thy Heart be thy fore-runner, that when thy body drops off from thee thou mayſt know where to betake thy ſelf, and find ready entertainment there where thy Heart hath been long before. Why doſt thou hang downwards, O my Soul? why doſt thou bend ſo much to the Earth and Earthly things? what is there here below that is not beneath thee, and altogether unworthy of thy Love? how empty, and vain, and thorny are theſe things? don't waſt thy time, weary thy ſelf for very vanity, don't prick and wound thy ſelf with theſe things any more. What aileth thee, O my Soul, that thou art ſo backward to the Love of Chriſt? is it becauſe

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thou canſt not ſee Chriſt with the Eyes of thy Body? thou ſhalt ſee him with thoſe Eyes hereafter, when he comes in his Glory, and thy body is raiſed and repaired, and fitted to bear ſuch a ſight; thou canſt not ſee the Wind, but thou heareſt it's noiſe, and feeleſt it's blaſts; and doſt thou not hear Chriſt's voice in his Word? doſt thou not feel the breathings of his Spirit in his Ordinances? Thou art inviſible thy ſelf, O my Soul, and art thou ſo drenched in fleſh, that viſible objects ſhall have more Power to draw down thy heart, than this moſt glorious Object (though now inviſible) ſhall have power to draw up thy Heart? doſt thou queſtion and doubt of his love to thee? and doth this damp and diſcourage thy Affections? whoſe Image is this which is engraven upon thee? is it not the Image of Chriſt? what writing is that upon thy Heart? is it not Gods Law written by Chriſts Spirit? whoſe deckings and adornings haſt thou got about thee? what Beauty is this which is put upon thee? is it not Chriſts comlineſs? where hadſt thou thoſe Bracelets, that Ring, thoſe Jewels, that Chain of Graces? are they not Chriſts love tokens which he hath given thee? and yet wilt thou doubt of his love? if thou feeleſt corruption ſtrong, yet doſt thou not perceive ſome Grace, although it be weak? haſt thou not ſome love to Chriſt, although

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it be low? are not thy desires chiefly after him, which evidence that thy chief love is to him? and is it so with any but such whom Christ doth love? doth not Christ love first? and yet wilt thou question his love? Banish then thy fears, silence thy doubts O my Soul, rouze up thy self, and climb up by the Jacob's ladder which is let down to thee from Heaven, and settle thy love upon Jesus Christ and those things which are above, where Christ sits at the Right hand of God. Such retired Contemplations of Christ, and Soliloquies, and pleadings with your own Souls when alone by your selves, will tend exceedingly to the promotion of your love unto Christ.

2. Would you have much love to Christ? Be much in Reading and Studying the Scriptures. The Scriptures are a Glass in which Christ may be seen; he cannot be seen Face to Face in this World: this is the happiness of the Triumphant Church in Heaven, not of the Militant Church upon the Earth; what may here be discerned of Christ, it is in the glass of the Scriptures and Gospel-Ordinances: this is that glass spoken of, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *We all with open face beholding as in a glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from Glory*

to Glory. Christ is the Glory of the Lord, the brightness of his Fathers Glory: would you have much love to him? be often looking, viewing and beholding of him in the glass of the Scriptures. By much beholding of him, you may be transformed more and more into the likeness of his Holiness, and into the likeness of his Love, which is Glory begun. The Scriptures have the Image of Christ engraven upon them; the Image of the Father is upon the Son, and the Image of the Son is upon the Scriptures; there you may see the Picture of Christ, the Beauty of Christ; at least some lineaments are there drawn by the hand of God, although not fully and to the life; I mean such as you will see in him when you come to behold him face to face in Heaven; yet his Beauty is drawn in such proportions and with such shadows as you are now capable of beholding. Would you have much love unto Christ whom you have never seen? look much upon his Picture and Image in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are Christs Love-letters. In the second and third Chapters of the *Revelations*, Christ doth send Seven Epistles to the Seven *Asian* Churches. There are many Epistles and Love-letters as it were in the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, wherein Christ doth give most kind expressions of

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most endeared Love unto his People. Read much and study Christ's Love-letters, especially those parts of the Scriptures wherein Christ doth express most of his kindness and love. See how kindly Christ doth express himself, *Joh.* 14. *v.* 1, 2, 3, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. 27. *Chap.* 15. *v.* 9, 13, 14, 15, 16. *Chap.* 16. *v.* 7. 22, 24, 26, 27, 33. *Chap.* 17. *v.* 9, 10, 11, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. *Chap.* 20. *v.* 17. Read often and consider such places. Let the Word of Christ dwell richly in you, and this will feed and maintain your love to Christ, this is a means to have Christ dwell in your hearts, not only by Faith, but also by most endeared Love.

3. Would you have much Love to Christ? be much in *Prayer* unto God for this Love. *Eph.* 6. 23. *Peace be unto the Brethren and love, with Faith from God the Father.* Not only Peace is from God, who is called the God of Peace, and Faith from God, who worketh it by his Almighty power; but also Love is from God, who is the God of Love; he circumciseth the heart to love himself, and to love his Son. This love of Christ is a Grace of the Spirit, which God doth freely give and powerfully work, the Beginnings of it, the Increase of it, all the Measures and Degrees of it are from him.

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If you would attain high measures of love to Christ, you must apply your selves unto God in Prayer, and therein diligently seek to him for it. If you would have much love to Christ in your hearts, you must be often at the Throne of Grace upon your Knees; and there humbly acknowledge, if not the want, yet the weakness of your love to Christ; bewail your Sins which do damp your Affections, and earnestly request that he would work your hearts unto a strong love; be importunate in Prayer for this; follow God day by day with the same requests, plead with him for it, fill your mouths with Arguments. and fill your Arguments with Faith and fervent Desires. Tell him, whatever lovelines and love there be in Christ, whatever attractives to draw forth your love, yet of your selves you are utterly unable to put forth the least motion of true affection unto Christ. Tell him, that this love to Christ, though it be your Duty, yet it is his Gift, that you ought to act it, but this you cannot do, unless he works it. Tell him how easily he can enkindle this Fire of Love to Christ in your bosoms, and blow it up into a flame. Tell him, he hath bid you to ask and you shall have, and whatever you ask according to his will he heareth, and that it is his will you should

love

love Christ not only truly, but also strongly. Tell him, you desire much love to Christ, and that these desires do come from himself, and therefore earnestly desire the fulfilling of them. Tell him, if you do not love Christ much, you shall be apt to overlove the Creature, which will be displeasing to him, therefore request that you may have such a love to Christ as may overpower all other love, and keep your hearts from all Inordinacy of affections to anything beneath and besides the Lord Jesus Christ. Plead how much it will be for his Glory, that you should have much love unto Christ, that hereby you shall be enabled to honour him the more in the world. Plead how much it will be for your good; tell him, if you asked Corn, and Wine, and Oyl; if you asked Wealth and Honours, and Creature-delights in abundance, they might be a snare to you, and for your hurt; but a strong love to Christ is needful and useful, and be sure will be for your good, urge his Promise of *Circumcising the heart to love him*, and plead his Faithfulness; and if you be thus importunate in Prayer for much love to Christ, and will not be denyed, you shall not be denyed.

4. Would you have much Love to Christ, get much Faith; Faith worketh Love both to the

the Father and to the Son. According to the meaſure of your Faith, ſo will the meaſure of your Love be. Such as are without any Faith, are without any Love; ſuch as have but a feeble faith, have but a weak love; and ſuch as have the ſtrongeſt faith, have the ſtrongeſt love. The ſtrongeſt Faith giveth the cleareſt diſcovery of Chriſts infinite Excellencies and Perfections. It is not the eye of Senſe which doth diſcern Chriſt, neither is it the eye of Reaſon which doth diſcern him; whatever diſcoveries we have of Chriſt, it is by Revelation, and this is diſcernable only by Faith. Faith is the Evidence of things not ſeen, and the unſeen Chriſt is evident by Faith to be the moſt excellent Perſon, and the moſt ſuitable Object of love; and the more evident the Object of love is, the ſtronger will the love be. Moreover, Faith is not only the Eye of the Soul to diſcern Chriſt, but alſo the Hand of the Soul, not only to take hold on him, but alſo to receive from him of his Fulneſs Grace for Grace, and by conſequence more of this Grace of love to him. Our Communion with Chriſt is by Faith; the more intimate acquaintance and fellowſhip we have with thoſe whom we love, the more endeared will be our love. The ſtrongeſt Faith brings us unto the greateſt intimacy, fellowſhip and

and familiarity with Christ, and therefore it is a means of the strongest Love. Endeavour then to get a strong Faith, and to live daily in the powerful exercise thereof. The more you live by Faith, the more you will dwell in the love of Christ.

5. Would you have much Love unto Christ? labour for much of the *Spirit*; labour for much of the Light of the Spirit. There must be not only the Glass of the Scriptures, and the Eye of Faith, but also the Light of the Spirit, that you may have a clear discerning of this lovely Lord Jesus; Labour for much of the Operation of the Spirit. The Spirit is like wind to blow up the Sparks of Love in your hearts into a flame. Labour for the inhabitation of the Spirit, and that the Promise may be made good to you which Christ giveth to his Disciples, *Joh.* 14. 16, 17. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

6. Would you have much Love unto Christ? labour for clear Evidences of his Love

Love unto you. The apprehenſions of Chriſt's Lovelineſs may excite to ſome love; but the full well grounded perſwaſions of Chriſts love to you, will above all heighten your love to Chriſt. Doubts of Chriſt's love do cauſe fears, and fears do contract the heart, and therefore are oppoſite to love, which is the expanſion and enlargement of the heart. Perfect love caſteth out fear, the more love the leſs fear, and the more doubts and fears the leſs love. Such as doubt much of Chriſts love to them, they may love Chriſt truly, but they cannot love Chriſt ſtrongly. You will love a leſs lovely perſon that loves you, more than a more lovely perſon that hates you; the love of the Perſon beloved is a moſt amiable Qualification and ſtrong attractive, yea one of the greateſt Incentives and Inducements unto love. Get then a perſwaſion of the infinite love to you of this Infinitely lovely perſon, that you may be able to ſay with *Paul*, Gal. 2. 20. *Who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* Look diligently into the Word of God, and find out the Characters there of thoſe that are Beloved by Chriſt; and then look narrowly into your ſelves, and ſee whether your face will not anſwer that face in the Looking-glaſs of the Scriptures; ſee whether you

you cannot find the lineaments of the New Man within you, whether you have not experienced a gracious change; Is there not Light where there was Darkneſs? Is there not Life where there was Death? Is there not Love where there was Hatred? Is there not the Law of God written, where the Law of Sin did command all? Is not the Biaſs of your Wills and Hearts God-ward, and Chriſt-ward, and Heaven-ward; which heretofore was only Sin-ward, and Earth-ward, and Hell-ward? Pray earneſtly unto God, that he would give you a full aſſurance, that if you are indeed effectually called, if you are indeed united and related unto Jeſus Chriſt, you may know it, and no longer doubt thereof. In a word, ſeek diligently after the Manifeſtation of Chriſts Love in all the wayes of his Ordinances; reſt not in the out-ſide of Ordinances, but ſeek after Chriſt in Ordinances, follow him from Sabbath to Sabbath, from Ordinance to Ordinance, and alwayes be looking for him, and looking towards him, till he turn about and look upon you, and give you a gracious ſmile. Seek and wait for that Manifeſtation of himſelf which he hath promiſed to them that love him, *Joh.* 14. 21. Wait for his Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt from Heaven, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. to ſhed abroad

abroad the ſenſe of his Love into your hearts, *Rom.* 5. 5. and if you did know aſſuredly and had a ſenſe thereof given unto you by the Spirit of Chriſt, O the Joyes which then you would have in him! O the love which then you would have to him! As your Joyes would be unſpeakable, ſo your Love would be unſpeakable too; ſuch a warmth of heart and burning of love to Chriſt you would feel within you, as is beyond the Rhetorick of the Tongue to ſet forth.

7. Would you have much love to Chriſt? get much hatred of Sin, and accordingly watch and pray, and ſtrive and fight againſt Sin, as the worſt of Evils, as that which doth ſo much diſpleaſe your Lord. Bewail ſins of daily incurſion, and labour that your ſins of Infirmity may be leſs every day than other; Take heed of ſins of ſudden ſurprize, but chiefly of deſigned ſins, and that you comply not with any temptations unto groſſer miſcarriages, which like water caſt upon the Fire of your love to Chriſt, will put out the flame, and leave only a few unperceivable ſparks in the corner of your hearts. Suffer not Sin to have any room in your hearts; or if it will abide and you cannot thruſt it quite out, let it not have a quiet habitation within

within you; disturb sin as much as you can; wage war every day with your remaining Lusts; let no day pass over your heads without giving some blows, some thrusts and wounds to Sin. Streighten the room of Sin in your hearts as much as may be; the more room Sin hath in your hearts, the less room Christ will have there. Particularly, take heed of inordinate love to the world, and the things in the world, the prevalency of which love will damp your love to Christ; by how much more the world gets of your love, by so much the less Christ will have of it. A subordinate love you may have to Persons and Things in the world, but let no person or thing have your chief love but only Christ; love nothing for it self with an abstracted love, but love all inferiour things with inferiour love; love all under the Lord, and in the Lord, and for the Lord's sake; get all inordinate affections to the world crucified by the Cross of Christ. You must have dying affections to perishing things, if you would have a living and active love to the ever-living Jesus.

8. Would you have much love unto Christ? associate your selves most with those that have most love unto Christ; you may

may fetch light from their light, and you may fetch warmth from their fire. Dead coals are enkindled by the living, and your dead hearts may be enkindled with love to Chriſt by the warm diſcourſe of thoſe that have warm hearts. Be ready to ſpeak of Chriſt and for Chriſt in any company as you have fit opportunity, and diligently watch for an Occaſion. Shut your ears againſt and reprove profane and filthy Communication; divert that which is vain and frothy, and be ready to begin and promote that which is ſerious and ſavoury, that which is gracious and may tend to your own and others Edification. Study the Art, and practice it, of provoking all whom you converſe withall, not unto Strife and Contention, but unto this love and Affection unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and whileſt you are endeavouring to warm others with this Love, you may be warmed your ſelves.

9. And laſtly, Would you have much Love unto Chriſt? be much in the exerciſe of this love. Hereby it is exerciſed and heightned: Uſe legs and have legs; and if you act this love frequently, it will hereby get ſtrength and activity; every day endeavour to put forth ſome vigorous acts of love unto Jeſus Chriſt. In your ordinary

Callings and secular Business and Employment, you may send up some looks of Love unto Jesus Christ in your Ejaculations. But especially in the Duties of Gods immediate Worship, labour that your love may flow out unto Christ most vigorously. In your daily secret Devotion and Family-Worship, let love to Christ draw forth tears from your eyes, at least cause grief and sorrow in your hearts, in the acknowledgment of your sins, whereby he hath been dishonoured and displeased. Let love to Christ draw forth earnest desires after Christ, and those communications, manifestations, and consolations which he doth give to none but such as are his. Let love to Christ put requests into your mouths, arguments into your requests, and fervour into your arguments in your pleadings with him at the Throne of Grace for further supplies of his Grace, and that you may be brought into more intimacy of acquaintance with him. Every day you should express your love to Christ, especially on the Lords day, when almost the whole day is to be spent in publick and private Exercises of Religious Worship; in all, your love to Christ should be in exercise. In your attendances upon him in Ordinances you must bring not only your Bodies before him, but present your Hearts

unto

unto him; this you ſhould be careful to do in publick Prayer and Hearing of the Word, Preaching and Singing Pſalms; often ſhould you endeavour in every Ordinance to lift up your hearts unto the Lord; but above all when you approach the Lords Table, all your Graces ſhould there and then be in exerciſe, eſpecially this Grace of love to Jeſus Chriſt: your Eye there ſhould affect your Heart, when you ſee the repreſentations of your crucified Lord, and think what manner of Love he did bear to you, that he ſhould ſubmit himſelf unto ſuch a Death for you, how ſhould this affect your hearts! And if ever, then your Love to Chriſt ſhould ſhew it ſelf, and act with the greateſt vigour and ſtrength.

SECTION XVII.

HAving given Directions how to attain love to Chriſt in the truth and in the ſtrength of it, I come now to the laſt ſort of Directions wherein you ſhould ſhew your love to Jeſus Chriſt.

More generally ſhew your Love to Chriſt in your Obedience unto Chriſt, *Joh.* 14. 15. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.*

Be faithful in performance of all known Duties which Christ doth command, and be careful in the forbearance of all known sins which Christ doth forbid. Let your great care be to please Christ, whoever is displeased, and your great fear be of offending Christ, whoever be offended with your strictness. Shew your love, 1. In the *Sincerity* of your Obedience, 2. In the *Willingness* of your Obedience. 3. In the *Universality* of your Obedience. 4. In the *Constancy* of your Obedience.

1. Shew your love to Christ, in the *Sincerity* of your Obedience. Hypocrites will do some things which Christ commandeth; but it is from carnal Motives and with carnal Designs; but let love to Christ be the Motive, and the Honour of Christ the End of your Obedience. Obey Christ because you love him, and with a design to please him. What you do, do heartily unto the Lord, and above all things desire and endeavour that what you do may find acceptation with him; 2 *Cor.* 5. 9. *Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him.*

2. Shew your love to Christ in the *Willingness* of your Obedience. Some will obey Christ,

Chriſt, but it is with great Backwardneſs; they will perform Duties, but they are burdenſome, a wearineſs, and toilſome, and the Commandments of Chriſt are grievous unto them; they are ſcarce ready unto any Duty, but when they are ſcourg'd unto it by the Rods of Affliction, or ſpurr'd and prickt forward by the goads of Conſcience. O the liſtleſneſs and indiſpoſition in the moſt, unto the moſt ſpiritual part of the Service of Chriſt! which is an evident proof of the defect of love, either in the truth of it, or at leaſt in the meaſure and degree of it. Let your love ſhew it ſelf in the *willingneſs* of your Obedience: ſerve the Lord with a willing and ready mind, with alacrity and chearfulneſs of ſpirit, looking upon the Service of Chriſt as your Honour, and eſteeming every Duty to be your Priviledge. If you have any conſtraints unto Obedience, let them be the conſtraints of love; as 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. If you be forced to obey Chriſt, let there be no violence but the violence of love; if you be dragg'd to Duty, let it be with no other cords than the cords of love; let love be the Spur and Goad to prick you forward, that you may not only walk but run in the ways of Chriſts commandments with an enlarged heart.

3. Shew your love to Christ in the *Universality* of your Obedience. Hypocrites will perform some Duties which are for their turn, and will serve their carnal designs; other duties they omit and totally neglect; let your love to Christ discover it self in your respect to all his Commandments. Though you cannot here attain Perfection of Obedience, yet let your Obedience be universal; obey Christ not only in open Duties, which men are witnesses of, but also in secret Duties, and spiritual Duties, which depend upon the exercise of the Mind; such as Meditation, Contemplation, Self-search, and Elaculation, as also in the spiritual part of all Duties, which no Eye can be witness unto but the Eye of God; and hereby you may be distinguished from all Hypocrites in the World.

4. Shew your love to Christ in the *Constancy* of your Obedience, *Gal.* 5. 7. *Ye did run well, who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?* Some Hypocrites are zealous Professors for a while, and at first setting out seem to out-strip many that are sincere; but they soon tire, and are weary not only *in* well doing but *of* it; they quickly stumble and fall, and not only fall down, but fall off; not only fall back, but fall away,

away, and turn fearful Apostates. Shew your love to Christ not only in setting out well, but in continuing your Christian course well unto the end of the course of your Lives. Begin well, and patiently continue in well doing: Persevere in your Obedience; *Be not weary in well doing*, knowing that *in due time ye shall reap if ye faint not*, Gal. 6. 9. And if you *be faithful unto death*, Christ hath promised to *give you the Crown of Life*, Rev. 2. 10.

More particularly, shew your love to Christ, 1. In your learning, keeping, asserting and maintaining of Christ's truths. 2. In your publick spiritedness and zeal for Christs honour and interest. 3. In your vigorous resistance and opposition of Christs Enemies. 4. In your Following of Christ's example. 5. In your readiness to take up and patiently to bear Christs cross. 6. In your desires after Christs presence here, a longing for Christs second appearance at the last day.

1. Shew your love to Christ in your learning, keeping, asserting and maintaining Christs Truths. 1. Learn Christ's Truths, acquaint your selves by diligent reading of the Scriptures, and other books

that may be a help hereunto, with all fundamental truths of the Christian Religion in the first place, and so go on and proceed further to learn those truths which are superstructory; and whatever truths you find a Foundation for in the Scriptures which are the word of Truth, receive them, not only in the light of them, but also in the love of them. If the branches of truths be in your heads, and the leaves of them in your profession, and the fruit of them in your actions, let the root of them be in your Hearts. 2. Having learned the truths of Christ as they are in Jesus, let them not hang loose in your understandings, but get them fastned and fixed, and close girt about the loins of your minds; hold the truths of Christ fast, prize them above all jewels, don't part with them upon any terms; let all go, estate, liberty and life it self, rather than any of this rich treasure which Christ hath entrusted you withal. 3. Assert the truths of Christ; be not ashamed or afraid to own any truths of Christ in the most adulterous and gainsaying generation: profess your belief of Christ and of the truths of Christ, endeavour that the light of these truths may shine abroad: and cast forth such bright beams in the dark world where you live, that others may be brought hereby unto the

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the knowledge of the Truth. 4. Endeavour to maintain Christs truths. Earnestly contend for the Doctrine of Faith once delivered to the Saints; endeavour to convince gainsayers, and to defend Christs truths against those corrupt and erroneous opinions and Doctrines, which like leaven is very apt to spread and infect the minds of men.

2. Shew your love to Christ in your publick spiritedness, and zeal for Christs honour and interest. Let your affections be publick; not private, narrow, contracted and centring it self; let your love be a publick and general love. Love not only Relations, but love all Christs Disciples though of different Perswasions and interests, because of the Image of Christ; and love not only your Friends that love you, but also your Enemies that hate you, because of the command of Christ. Let your desires be publick desires; desire the welfare of the universal Church, and of all Gods people throughout the World, and accordingly Pray for their Peace and Prosperity, and endeavour as you have opportunity to promote the publick good more than your own private advantage; seek not your own things, but the things of Jesus Christ. Let your griefs be publick griefs; grieve not only for your

own sins, but also for the sins of others, whereby Christ is dishonoured in the world. Grieve not only for your own afflictions, but also for the afflictions of *Joseph*, *Heb.* 13. 3. *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being your selves also in the body.* You are in the same mystical body with all Christ's afflicted members, and when some members suffer, the rest should suffer too, by way of sympathy; Bleeding in their wounds, and grieving in their sorrows; be ready also to relieve any, especially Christs Disciples when they are in distress and want, according to your capacity and as you have opportunity. Employ all your Talents for your Masters glory, and endeavour to promote the interest of the Lord Jesus unto the utmost of your abilities. 1. In reference to those which are without. If you are called your selves, labour to call others unto Christ, as *Andrew* called *Peter*, *Philip* called *Nathaniel* unto the *Messias*, *John* 1.40. 41,44,45. If you have found the *Messias*, or rather have been found of him, let your love to Christ, and love to Souls prompt you to endeavour the Conversion of others that are your Relations, your Friends and Acquaintances. Put your unconverted Friends in mind of their miserable Estates whilst un-

der the guilt and reigning power of sin, whilst slaves to the Devil and their own lusts; mind them of Death and the fearful consequences thereof to all unpardoned sinners. Tell them of Christ, that he is the only Saviour and Redeemer of Mankind: how able and willing he is to save them, if they seek after him and apply themselves unto him. Tell them that not long since you were in the same estate with themselves, living in the practice of the same sins and going on in the same way to destruction; and that the Lord hath shewed mercy unto you in your Conversion, and bringing you into a state of Salvation. Tell them that there is mercy also for them if they look after it, that Gods Grace is most free, his mercy most plentiful, that Christ is most Gracious and casteth out none that come unto him. Tell them of the amiableness of Christs Person, of the surpassing love which he hath shewn to fallen mankind in his dying for them; and that though he were dead, yet he is alive and lives for evermore to intercede for all them that make choice of him, and make use of him for their Advocate. Therefore perswade them that they would break off their sins by Repentance, which otherwise will be the ruine both of their bodies and of their Souls in Hell, and without delay that they,

they would come unto Christ and accept of him upon Gospel terms. If any of you cannot manage these arguments well your selves, perswade them, if you can, to hear such Ministers and Sermons, as through Gods blessing have been effectual for your Conversion; and thus you may be instrumental to augment the Kingdom of Christ, which is one of the best wayes of expressing your love unto Christ. 2. In reference to them which are within; labour to promote the interest of Christ amongst them that are truly Gracious, by vigorous endeavours to strengthen and establish them, to quicken and encourage them in the ways of the Lord: Communicate the experiences which you have had, as you see there is real need; and it may tend not so much to your praise as your Masters honour. Labour in your places to be both burning and shining lights; be forward to every good word and work. Look upon your selves as the devoted Servants of Christ, and that you are not your own, and therefore lay out your selves to the utmost for him, and give all diligence to glorifie him with your bodies and spirits, with your Estates and interests, with your gifts and talents, all which are his, and ought to be at his devotion.

3. Shew your love to Chriſt in your vigorous reſiſtance and oppoſition of Chriſt's Enemies. There are three grand Enemies of Chriſt which you are by your Baptiſm engaged to fight againſt, namely the Devil, the Fleſh, and the World, which war both againſt Chriſt, and againſt your Souls. This Trinity of Adverſaries agree in one, and combine together againſt his anointed, doing their utmoſt endeavour to break his bands, to untye his cords, and to unhinge his Government; they would pluck the Crown off of Chriſts head could they reach it, and the Scepter out of his hand; they would diveſt Chriſt if they could of all his power here on Earth, and confine him to his territories in Heaven; but all their attempts in this kind have been and will be in vain; Chriſt hath tryed the ſtrength of theſe Enemies, and hath vanquiſhed them; but ſtill ſome life and power is left with them to war againſt the holy ſeed. You are Chriſts Souldiers, liſted under his banner; ſhew your fidelity and your love to your Captain and General, in manfully maintaining the ſpiritual combat againſt his and your ſpiritual Enemies; fight the good fight of Faith, reſiſt unto blood, don't yield upon any account; diſdainfully turn away the Eye and Ear when theſe Enemies would entice and allure,

allure you, and stoutly make resolute opposition against them, when they do most furiously assault you; hearken to no suggestions of the Devil, temptations of the world or motions of the Flesh which would induce and draw you into ways of sin, or which would force and drive you out of the ways of Christ. Resist and oppose, and labour to gain some victories over these adversaries every day; especially get conquest over the Flesh, and the other two will be soon vanquished: Christ shewed his love to you in submitting himself to be crucified for you; do you shew your love to Christ in crucifying your Flesh with its affections and lusts for his sake, in your self-denial and mortifying the deeds of the body. When you deny your carnal Reason, your carnal Wisdom, your carnal Will, your carnal Affections, your carnal Interest, all inordinacies of your sensual appetite for the sake of Christ; when you crush pride, envy, revenge, malice, inordinate anger, inordinate love, inordinate desire, inordinate grief, lustfulness and all evil concupiscence for the sake and because of the command of Christ, all these are acts and evidences of love to Christ, and herein you should exercise your selves daily.

4. Shew your love to Christ in your following

lowing of his example: diſcover your affection unto him in your imitation of him, in writing after his copy, in treading in his ſteps, in walking as Chriſt himſelf walked, when he was here upon the Earth. Shew your love to Chriſt by labouring after likeneſs unto Chriſt, that you may be like him both in your inward diſpoſition, and in your outward converſation. Chriſt was lowly, be you humble and mean in your own eſteem: Chriſt was meek, be you gentle, eaſie to be intreated, and not eaſily provoked. Chriſt loved God, let God be the object of your love. Chriſt hated ſin, let ſin alſo be the object of your hatred. Chriſt contemned the world, do you get crucifyed affections unto it. Chriſt was compaſſionate to thoſe that were in diſtreſs, do you labour for the like bowels. Chriſt uſed to Worſhip publickly in the Synagogues, to pray with his Diſciples, and to ſpend time alſo in ſecret prayer, do you give your attendance in the publick aſſemblies of Gods people, worſhip God in your Families, and be often upon your knees at the Throne of Grace in ſecret. Chriſt's mind was a heavenly mind, let the ſame mind be in you as was in Chriſt. Chriſt's will was ſubmiſſive to his Fathers will, let the ſame will be in you as was in Chriſt. Chriſt's words were Gra-

cious

cious and edifying, let your speech be alwayes with Grace, savoury, and which may be for edification. Christs life was an active life, he was alwayes doing good, and he was exactly holy in all his actions, be you active and diligent in the service of God, in doing good to others, and be holy as Christ was holy in all manner of conversation. Thus should you shew your love to Christ in following Christs example, and in imitating of him in every thing wherein you are capable of such imitation.

5. Shew your love to Christ in your readiness to take up and patiently bear Christs cross. I don't say you should desire sufferings for Christ; but sure I am, that strong love to Christ will not permit you to decline them; dont go out of Gods way for them, neither go out of Gods way from them. If you meet with the cross in the way of duty, don't either turn back, or start aside, but chearfully take it up; and when you have got it up, patiently bear it, and don't throw it off, till God take it off. When it is your duty to suffer for Christ, look upon it also to be your priviledge, and be glad of the opportunity, rejoycing that you have any thing to part withal for the sake of Christ, if it be good Name, or good Estate, or good

Friends,

Friends, if it be liberty and life it ſelf; ſuch expreſſions of love are very honourable and very pleaſing to your Lord and Maſter.

6. And laſtly, Shew your love to Chriſt in your deſires after Chriſt's preſence here, and in your longing for his ſecond appearance at the laſt day. 1. Deſire Chriſts Gracious preſence here, and the manifeſtations thereof, that according to his promiſes he would come unto you, that he would draw near, and that you might feel that he is near. Deſire that you might have clearer diſcoveries of Chriſt, and more intimate communion and fellowſhip with Chriſt. Above all company and fellowſhip, deſire the company, fellowſhip and acquaintance with Chriſt, that you might walk with him and converſe with him, and that there might be a daily intercourſe between Chriſt and your ſouls, and that all diſtances between you, and ſtrangeneſs might be removed. Let your love expreſs it ſelf in deſires after Chriſt when he is abſent, and in delights when he is preſent; rejoyce in the Lord exceedingly when he doth manifeſt himſelf unto you graciouſly; admire his beauty and delight in his ſmiles; admire his love and delight in the perſwaſions of his favour; let the actings of your love, and the workings of it, be ſuch

to

to your beloved daily. 2. Desire also and long for the second appearance of Christ at the last day; when he saith, *Surely I come quickly*, do you say, *Amen*, *Even so come Lord Jesus*. Look upon time as slow of heel and wing, that it runs no faster, that it flies no swifter; look to the End of Time, and long for it, because then with these Eyes you shall see him whom your Soul loveth; because then you shall see Christ come down from the Throne of God with such brightness of Majesty, and brightness of Beauty, as will transport you with Wonder and Joy. Say, *When Lord Jesus wilt thou take to thy self thy great Power, and cloath thy self with thy Authority, and come down to judge the World? when wilt thou open the everlasting gates of Heaven which have been shut so long? When wilt thou descend from Heaven with a shout, with the sound of the great Trumpet, and send thine Angels to gather all thine Elect from the four Winds, that all who love thee may meet in one Society? when shall we put on our Garments of Immortality, and be caught up in the clouds to meet thee in the day of thy Triumph? When shall the day of our Coronation come, and of our admission into the Glorious Mansions which thou hast prepared for us in the Glorious Pallace which is above? When wilt thou shew us*

thy

thy ſelf, and give us to behold thee face to face? When wilt thou ſhew us the Father, and give us to behold him immediately without a Glaſs? When wilt thou ſhew us thy Glory which thou hadſt with the Father before the World was, and give us not only to ſee it, but alſo to ſhare in it? When wilt thou open the Treaſures of thy Love, and receive us into the neareſt, cloſeſt, and ſweeteſt embracements thereof, and give us to drink of thoſe Rivers of Pleaſures which are with thee? O haſten, Lord, haſten thy glorious appearance, that thou mayſt be glorified before the whole World, and we be glorified with thee; that we may be then taken to live with thee, and reign with thee; and be made perfectly happy in the full and everlaſting enjoyment of thee.

Thus I have done with theſe Directions, the laſt thing in this Uſe of Exhortation.

And what do you now ſay after all Motives to excite and perſwade you to the Love of Chriſt, and Directions therein? Shall all be in vain?

What do you ſay, Sinners? ſhall Chriſt have your hearts or no? will you harbour baſe luſts in your hearts, that will damn you, and keep out the Lord Jeſus Chriſt who alone can ſave you? ſhall I gain no hearts for Chriſt by all my Sermons which I have preached concerning the Love of Chriſt?

Christ? My Lord and Master hath sent me to woe you, to win your hearts for him; may I speed or no? shall my message be accepted, and Jesus Christ the most lovely person find entertainment with you? If any person or thing in the world which you do most dearly love, do so well deserve your love, lock your ears still against all my words, and let them perish like an empty sound in the Air; lock your hearts against Christ, who stands knocking at the door, and give an absolute and peremptory refusal to give him any room there; But if in the whole world you cannot find out a suitable Beloved besides Christ, if there be nothing here below but is unworthy of your hearts, if all inferiour things whilest they have your chief Love do debase and defile you, and unless your hearts be taken off from them, will certainly ruine and destroy you everlastingly; O then be perswaded without any further delay to open the everlasting doors of your hearts, to let Christ into them, and set Christ up in the highest seat of your affections; O be perswaded to give Christ your chief Love, to give him your Heart, and your whole heart; with grief and hatred let go your hold of sin, and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ in the Arms of your deerest Love. And then I would

say

ſay to you, as our Saviour did to *Zacheus* when he gave him entertainment in his houſe, *This day is Salvation come unto you.* O happy day unto you! O happy you that ever you were born, if this day Chriſt ſhould be heartily entertained by you! This then would be the day of your Converſion, in which the Angels would rejoyce; and though Grief and Trouble might invade you for a while becauſe of your ſin, yet this would make way for your Spiritual Joy. Weeping might endure for a Night, but joy would come in the Morning. But O the Joy which you will then have in the day of your Coronation, when all tears ſhall be wiped away from your Eyes, and when you ſhall have admiſſion into the glorious preſence of the Lord, where there is fullneſs of Joy and Pleaſures for evermore.

And what do you ſay, Believers? you that have ſome Love to Chriſt, ſhall this Doctrine, and theſe Sermons which I have preached, be a means to raiſe and heighten your Love? your Love hath been too much mixed; will you Love Chriſt more purely? your love hath been very weak; will you love Chriſt more ſtrongly? Your Love to Chriſt hath been but a ſpark; ſhall it now break forth into a flame? after ſuch

blow

blowings, shall there be no burnings? Whe you think of Christs Person, so amiable, hi Love so incomparable, his Benefits so ineſti mable, shall not this fire your hearts? an will you not now love him more dearly an ardently than ever? will you be perswade to get off your hearts from Earth and earth ly things, and get up your hearts to your Lord which is in Heaven, and to settle your Love there upon him, so as never to with draw it from him any more? Will you love the Lord Jesus much, whom you can ne ver love too much? will you now dwell in the Love of Christ, and be more frequent and fervent in the actings of it? Then, O what comfort would you find in your Love! and what sweetness in the sense of Christs Love! This would be the surest Evidence that Christ loveth you, because Christ loveth first; and how would this sweeten your passage through the Valley of Affliction, and through the Valley of Death. This would sweeten a bitter cup, and make a sweet cup more sweet. In Life, the sense of Christs Love will be better than Life; but at Death this will be the only stay and support which you can have; nothing else can give any well-grounded comfort in a dying hour. Death rageth and playeth the Tyrant every where, shooteth his Arrows hither

hither and thither; ſometimes he ſmiteth thoſe that are Elder than your ſelves, and ſometimes thoſe that are Younger; ſometimes thoſe that are weaker than your ſelves, ſometimes thoſe that are ſtronger; ſometimes thoſe that are better, ſometimes thoſe that are worſe; ſometimes the righteous are ſmitten, ſometimes the wicked; ſometimes the profane, and ſometimes the Profeſſors; that all might be awakened to prepare. And what is it that can give you comfort when you come to the ſides of the pit? You may have the Love of your dear Yoke-fellows, weeping and mourning at your Bed-ſide, Children, Kindred and Friends wringing their hands, and looking with a pitiful countenance upon you, grieving to part with you; but what comfort can all their Love yield unto your departing Spirits? Their Love may diſturb you, and make you the more unwilling to dye and leave them, becauſe they are ſo unwilling to part with you. But the Love of Chriſt and ſenſe thereof, will be a Comfort indeed, becauſe he is a Friend whom you are not departing from, but going unto. And O the delight which then you may have, when Friends look moſt ſad, and Death looks moſt grim, when the trembling Joynts, the Clammy Sweats, the intermitting Pulſe, the falling Jaws, the

the ratling Throat, and other ſymptoms giʃve notice of near approaching Death: then to think, *I am now come not only to the Door of Eternity, but alſo the Gate of my Fathers Houſe, where many Saints are gone before me, and many Angels are attending for me, and where my dearly beloved Jeſus is, and hath prepared for my Reception and eternal Habitation. Here are Friends about by Bedſide, who ere long will convey this Body to the Grave, to be fed upon by Worms; but here are Angels at my Bed-ſide, waiting for my Soúl, that ſo ſoon as it is looſned from this dying Carkaſe, they may convey me to the heavenly Paradiſe: Within a few minutes now, and I ſhall be with my deareſt Lord, where my Faith will be ſwallowed up in Viſion, my Hope in Fruition, and my Love will come to Perfection. O the Glorious light which there and then will ſhine into every corner of my mind! O the Love and Joy and ineffable Delight, when I come to ſee and enjoy and live for ever with my moſt dearly Beloved!* This, This only will make you willing to Dye, and this ſenſe of Chriſts Love will effectually ſweeten your paſſage through the dark entry of Death.

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APPENDIX

Concerning

Chriſt's Manifeſtation of Himſelf unto them that love him.

Joh. XIV. latter part of *verſ.* 21.

—— *And he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt my ſelf unto him.*

WE read, *Luk.* 4. 22. *And all bare him witneſs, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.* Never did ſuch gracious and ſweet words drop from the lips of any man that ever lived, as thoſe from the lips of Chriſt when he was here upon the Earth; and of all Chriſt's words, thoſe which he ſpake to his Diſciples in his laſt Sermon, be-

fore his last Suffering, in the 14, 15, and 16 Chapters of *John*, are Superlatively sweet, and none more sweet in this Sermon than the words of my Text read unto you, *And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self unto him.* In the former part of the verse we have the Character of one that doth truly love Christ: *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* In the latter part of the verse which is my Text, we have the Priviledge of one that doth truly love Christ, and that is in three Promises which Christ doth make unto him: 1. *He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father.* 2. *And I will love him.* 3. *And will manifest my self unto him.* It is the last of these Promises which I shall speak unto by way of *Appendix* unto my Treatise of the Love which true Christians have and ought to have unto Christ, and that is the Promise of Christs manifesting himself unto such as love him. And the Doctrine is this.

Doct. *That Christ will manifest himself unto such as love him.*

In handling of this point I shall shew, 1. What it is for Christ to manifest himself. 2. That Christ will manifest himself to them that love him. 3. How Christ doth manifest

feſt himſelf unto ſuch. 4. When Chriſt doth manifeſt himſelf unto ſuch. 5. Where Chriſt doth manifeſt himſelf unto ſuch as love him. 6. And laſtly, make ſome Application.

SECTION I.

1. WHat it is for Chriſt to manifeſt Himſelf?

1. Chriſt doth manifeſt himſelf when he maketh a clearer diſcovery unto his Diſciples of the excellency of his Perſon, when he doth further unveil himſelf, and lets forth ſome beams and rays, with greater luſtre and brightneſs, to diſcover more of the oriency and tranſcendency of his ſoul raviſhing beauty unto them, which they had but a dimmer ſight and darker apprehenſions of before; and this is done when Chriſt doth more fully impart of the ſpirit of Wiſdom and Revelation unto them. Upon this account the Apoſtle did pray in the behalf of the believing *Epheſians*, that the Lord would give them the ſpirit of wiſdom and Revelation to enlighten their underſtandings in the knowledge of him, *Eph.* 1.16,17,18. They had the Spirit before, and ſome knowledge of Chriſt before, but he prayes that God

would give them fuller measures of the spirit, to make a clearer discovery of Christ; that the eyes of their understandings might be more and more enlightned unto a more spiritual discerning of the surpassing Beauty and Excellency in Christs person, in the knowledge of whom the most enlightned Christians are capable of further growth unto the end of their life: hence the Exhortation of the Apostle *Peter*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. *But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

2. Christ doth manifest himself, when he maketh a deep impression, and giveth a sweet sense to his Disciples of his presence. Christ is never really absent from such as Love him, but he may seem to be so sometimes, they may apprehend him to be afar off, he may and often doth withdraw the sense of his presence, *Cant.* 5. 6. *I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone.* Christ doth manifest himself, when he doth draw near to his people, and maketh them feel that he is near, giving them a sweet sense of his presence through the powerful breathings of his Spirit upon them, whereby their hearts are quickned and enlarged, and drawn forth towards himself, and their graces excited unto powerful exercise.

3. And

3. And chiefly Christ doth manifest himself, when he makes discovery of his Love unto them that love him; when he gives them to see not only the beauty of his face, but also the smiles of his face, when he gives them to behold the amiableness of his countenance, and withall lifts up upon them the light of his countenance, when he sheddeth abroad the sense of his Love into their hearts, giving them a full perswasion of his special Love unto them, and also a sweet sense thereof. Thus Christ doth sometime look kindly, and speak kindly unto his people; and this sweet Language is not spoken to the ear of the body, but inwardly by his Spirit to their Souls, when he saith to the soul, *I am thy Salvation and thy Saviour, I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, and my Love is unchangeable; The Mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my loving kindness shall never depart, and be removed from thee. I have given my self for thee, and I have given my self unto thee, and I will never repent of this gift. I have chosen thee for my self, called and joyned thee unto my self, and I will never repent of this choice, nor suffer thee to be disjoyned from me for ever. I have thee upon my heart, and keep thee in my hand, and no powers of Earth or Hell shall be able to pluck thee thence; I*

have given thee my grace, and I will ſhew thee my glory, and e're long I will appear in the world and receive thee to my ſelf, that where I am there thou mayeſt be alſo. Dry up then thy tears, clear up thy countenance, baniſh thy fears, droop no longer, deſpond no more; but be of good chear, thy ſins are forgiven thee, thy name is written in my book which none can blot out. Thou haſt a true Love for me, and my Father himſelf loveth thee, and I love thee with a moſt endeared Love: and therefore do not queſtion or doubt of my Love any more. Thus Chriſt doth manifeſt himſelf and his Love ſometimes unto drooping deſponding ſouls.

SECT. II.

2. THat Chriſt will manifeſt himſelf unto them that love him, appears, in that his Love doth engage him, and his word doth engage him hereunto. His Love doth engage him: The Love of Chriſt is like fire, that cannot conceal it ſelf long, and no fire ſo ſtrong, and hath ſuch a vehement flame as the Love of Chriſt to his people. *Joſeph* had a great love to his Brethren notwithſtanding all their unkindneſs, and although he concealed himſelf for a while,

and

and ſpake roughly unto them, yet after they were ſenſible of their fault, and were filled with perplexing fears, he could conceal himſelf no longer from them, as in *Gen.* 45. 1, 2. *Then Joſeph could not refrain himſelf before all that ſtood by him, and he wept aloud, and ſaid unto his Brethren, I am Joſeph*, and ver. 4. *Joſeph ſaid unto his brethren, come near me, I am Joſeph your brother whom ye ſold into Egypt.* So Chriſt may conceal himſelf for a while from his people, whatever love he hath to them, and whatever they have to him. Some unkindneſſes they have ſhewn may be the cauſe of this hiding; but when they are ſenſible of their fault, full of grief and perplexity for their offences, his Love will not permit him to hide himſelf much longer; His Love will engage him to manifeſt and diſcover himſelf, and ſay, I am Jeſus your Saviour, come near me my brethren, come near me that you may have a clearer view of me, that ye may know me, and know that I do love you. The Word alſo of Chriſt doth engage him to manifeſt himſelf unto them that Love him; It is Chriſts promiſe here in the Text, *He that loveth me ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will Love him, and will manifeſt my ſelf unto him.* Chriſts word is ſure, true and faithful is Chriſts name; the

ordinances of the Heavens may ſooner fail, than Chriſt fail of his Word and Promiſe.

SECTION III.

3. HOw Chriſt doth manifeſt himſelf unto them that Love him.

1. Chriſt doth here in this world manifeſt himſelf but in part and darkly. The Soul is not now capable of the fulleſt and cleareſt Manifeſtation of Chriſt. This is a Happineſs reſerved for the other world: 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. *Beloved, now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is*, Joh. 17. 24. *Father I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me.* It is hereafter that Chriſts Diſciples ſhall be perfectly like unto Chriſt, and ſhall have a perfect Manifeſtation of Chriſt, that they ſhall ſee him as he is: It is hereafter that they ſhall behold his glory. The luſtre and brightneſs of Chriſts glory is ſo great that ſhould he now let forth the beams thereof upon them, it would dazle and amaze them, it would ſtrike them blind, yea it would ſtrike them dead; there is

need,

need, because of their weakness, that Christ should keep a veil on his face, when he makes discovery of himself: they cannot now bear the full patefaction and manifestation of Christ; therefore Christ doth discover himself but in part. As the Queen of *Sheba* saith concerning *Solomons* wisdom and prosperity, 1 *King.* 10. 6, 7. *It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy Acts, and thy wisdom; howbeit I believed not the words, until I came and mine eyes had seen it; and behold the one half was not told me, thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame thereof.* It is not the one half which Christs Disciples do now hear or can discern of their masters excellencies. It hath not now entred into their hearts to conceive what Beauties and Glories and most admirable perfections there are hid in their Beloved; not only Christs Love but also Christs Loveliness doth pass their knowledge. There are such dimensions of most wonderful Glory in Christs person, as do infinitely transcend the capacity of the most elevated minds, fully to comprehend. Christ doth manifest himself truly to them that Love him, yet it is but partly, and that but a little part, it is but darkly by the beams of a more obscure light, 1 *Cor.* 13. 9, 10, 11, 12. *For we know in part, and prophesie in part; But when that*

which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away: When I was a child I ſpake as a child, I underſtood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childiſh things: For now we ſee thorow a glaſs darkly, but then Face to Face; Now I know in part, then I ſhall know as I am known. We Miniſters Propheſie but in part, we can tell you but a little of what there really is in Chriſt, and both we and you know but in part; our conceptions of Chriſts excellencies and our expreſſions now are childiſh, hereafter there will be a perfect manifeſtation of Chriſt, and then all imperfections of knowledge will be removed. Now you may ſee Chriſt, but it is through a glaſs darkly; hereafter face to face. Indeed it is ſaid, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *We all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the Glory of the Lord are changed*, &c. There is a comparative open diſcovery of Chriſt now in Goſpel times, over what there was under the Law; the veil of Types and Figures, which covered and in a great meaſure hid Chriſt from their view, is now removed, our face is now open from that veil, but Chriſts face is not fully open, there is a glaſs ſtill between our eye and Chriſts face (the glaſs of Ordinances, which though it doth help us to ſee him, yet it keeps us from the cleareſt diſcovery of him),

him (we see but thorow a glass darkly; our eyes now need this glass to help our weakness, and that we may see what we do see: there is a time coming when we shall be above the need and use of the Ordinance-glasses, I mean when we shall see Christ face to face, and know him in heaven as we are known by him.

2. Christ doth now manifest himself gradually unto them that Love him. Christ doth not shew at once and altogether what he means to discover of himself and of his Love, but he doth it by degrees, a little at one time, and a little at another time, a little in this Ordinance, and a little in that; now he lets down some comfortable beams of the light of his countenance into the Soul; by and by clouds do arise and obscure this light, and darkness is upon the spirit: Sometimes Christ opens the curtain and looks upon the Soul, gives gracious smiles; by and by the curtain is drawn, and his face hid; now he appears, and then he disappears; he manifesteth himself at one time, withdraws himself at another time, and so leads his people on from one discovery of himself unto another, until he bringeth them at last unto the full discovery of himself in Glory.

3. Christ

3. Christ doth manifest himself most sweetly unto them that Love him, especially after long absence. When the Soul hath been seeking and cannot find him, wandring in the wilderness under amazing fears, perplexing doubts, doleful despondencies, sinking and heart-overwhelming grief; after a black night of deep desertion, Oh how sweet is the day spring from on high! Oh how comfortable are the bright beams of the morning light! when he shineth upon their dark and dejected and sorrowful spirits, giving them to know assuredly that they are the dearly beloved of his Soul, that he hath not forgotten them, that he will not forsake them, that he hath a more tender Love unto them than the mother to her sucking child! Oh the ravishments of spirit! Oh the transports of Soul which do arise from hence! O the songs which are then in their mouths! This is our beloved, we have waited for him; this is our dear Redeemer, we have trusted in him. Tongue cannot express the delight, the joy and gladness of heart which doth arise from the manifestation of Christs presence and love; the joy of harvest, the joy of the Bridegroom on the wedding day, the joy of victory and taking great spoils from an Enemy, the joy of a poor man in finding great treasures;

and

and the greatest delight which ever was found in the sweetest sensual enjoyment is not worthy to be compared with the joyes and exultings of heart, in the manifestation of Christ unto the Soul.

SECT. IV.

4. WHen doth Christ manifest himself unto them that love him?

1. Sometime Christ doth quickly manifest himself, after a little seeking; some young Converts have early and soon discoveries of Christ and his love; they are cast down for a little while, and Christ soon comes unto them and lifts them up again. Weeping endures but for a night, and that a short summer night, and joy cometh early in the morning. They have the Spirit of bondage who awakeneth them to fear, by and by the Spirit of Adoption doth graciously visit them, and make discovery of their relation to the Father, the love of their Saviour, and sheddeth abroad the sense of his love into their hearts.

2. Sometimes Christ is long before he manifest himself; it is long before some do seek Christ, and it is long before such do find him:

him. Christ waits long to be gracious unto them, and Christ doth often make them wait long before he manifesteth to them his loving kindnesses; yea sometimes early seekers are not early finders. Christ makes some wait a long time to try their faith and patience, their love and obedience, and that he may prepare them for more than ordinary comforts and sweetness which he intendeth to give in the discovery of himself unto them.

3. Sometimes Christ doth suddenly manifest himself unto them that love him, *Cant.* 6. 12. *Or ever I was aware, my Soul made me like the Chariots of Amminadib:* or ever they are aware they see the Chariots of *Israel* and the horsemen thereof, and the Lord Jesus doth come unto them in the Chariots of Salvation with such Glory and Lustre as doth transport and amaze them. Some Christians that truly love Christ, have sought him in this Ordinance, and have not found him, and they have sought Christ in that Ordinance, and have not found him; they have been looking and waiting and hoping that at this time Christ would discover himself, or at that time he would discover himself, and still he hath hid himself, still they have come off with disappointment: this hath been their Grief, this they have complained

plained of before God, and they have been under fears lest they should never see him, never meet with him at all; hereupon their Spirits have been ready to fail and sink within them, and in discouragement they have been ready to say or think that all their labour would be in vain; and yet they have resolved to seek him to their death, and though he should kill them, to put their trust in him: And behold on a sudden, when they have had the least expectation, and their hope hath been ready to give up the Ghost, they have met with Christ, and found him whom their soul loveth; on a sudden the Veil of the Temple hath been rent, and they have seen their Beloved in the Holy of Holies; on a sudden the clouds have fled, their darkness hath passed away, and the light hath shined; the North wind of trouble hath ceased, and the sweet Southern Gales have blown upon them; I mean they have been under such shinings and breathings of the Spirit, that they have seen and felt the presence of Christ; and such a sweet sense of his Love, as hath filled them with Soul-ravishing Joy.

4. Christ doth manifest himself Seasonably unto them that Love him. Though he doth not alwayes manifest himself when they

they moſt deſire, yet he doth manifeſt himſelf when they have moſt need, and then they have moſt need when they are moſt low; when they are moſt low in their Spirits, moſt poor and mean in their own eſteem, as well as moſt low in their condition through Affliction and Trouble; Humility and Patience under Affliction, doth make way for the Experience of Chriſts manifeſtation. Chriſt doth many times reſerve his Cordials for the fainting fits, and the ſweeteſt Conſolations in the diſcoveries of his Love for the time of the greateſt Adverſity; eſpecially, when the trouble is for his ſake, he is graciouſly preſent; *John* had his Viſions when he was Baniſhed for the ſake of Chriſt unto the Iſle *Patmos*; and when all men forſook *Paul* at his anſwer before *Nero*, then the Lord came to him, ſtood by him and ſtrengthned him.

SECTION V.

5. WHere doth Chriſt manifeſt himſelf unto them that love him?

This is in the way of his Ordinances, there he doth walk, there he doth appear unto his People. Sometimes Chriſt doth manifeſt himſelf in the way of private Ordinances, when

when they seek him in their Families, or in their Closets, when they speak of him in conference, or when they think of him in their Meditation and Contemplation; sometimes Christ doth manifest himself unto them that love him in the way of Publick Ordinances, in Publick Prayer or Fasting, in hearing of the Word, or when they are Feasting at his Table; especially in this last mentioned Ordinance Christ doth frequently manifest himself unto his Disciples most sweetly: At the Lords Table, the Lord doth appear; in breaking of Bread he discovers himself, as to the Disciples that went to *Emmaus*; in his Banqueting-house he gives them to feast on his Love; There are many who can say by experience, that if ever they met with Christ in their Lives, and in any Ordinance, they have met with him at the Sacrament, there he hath unveiled his face, there he hath revealed his Love, there he hath breathed upon them by his Spirit, there they have found and felt the Lord to be near.

SECT.

SECTION VI.

I Come now to the Application: And here that I may give to every one his Portion, I ſhall ſpeak, 1. To you that have no love unto Chriſt. 2. To you that have ſome Love to Chriſt, but are without theſe Manifeſtations. 3. To you that both love Chriſt, and have Manifeſtations of his love unto you.

Uſe 1. The Firſt Uſe doth concern ſuch as have no love at all unto Chriſt. Chriſt will manifeſt himſelf unto them that love him; this is Childrens Bread, and doth not belong to you, becauſe you do not belong unto Chriſt. This is a choiſe and moſt rich Priviledge, but you have nothing to do with it; *Procul ite Profani.* Avaunt all ye profane ones, all ye unclean ones, all ye ungodly ones, all Unbelievers whatſoever, who being without Faith, are alſo without Love to Chriſt; ſee that you come not near to lay your unclean hands upon this moſt excellent Promiſe; never look for any diſcovery of Chriſts love unto you whileſt you go on in ways of Sin, whileſt you are in your Natural Eſtate. I believe ſome of

of you may be ready to ſay, *What if Chriſt doth not manifeſt himſelf unto us? let us have our Honours and Dignity, let us have our Wealth and Plenty, let us have our Friends and Delights, and let who will look after thoſe aiery and fanciful Satisfactions in Chriſts Manifeſtation.* Sinners, is this your language either of tongue or heart? Let me tell you, one day you will ſing another tune, you will be of another mind; one day you will acknowledge, that all the Happineſs which you ſo eagerly purſued in the ſweeteſt creature-enjoyments, was but a Fancy, that it was thin, light and aiery; that it was vain and empty, when all is fled away and nothing left behind but Stings and bitter Grief, but inward wounds, gripes, and dreads, upon the ſight of approaching Death, and under apprehenſions of approaching Wrath, and eternal Torments in Hell. Then what would you give for an Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, and a well-grounded Perſwaſion of his ſpecial Love unto your Souls? Then the Manifeſtations of Chriſt will appear to be no aiery thing, and that nothing beſides this can rationally ſupport your Souls when you come to the Borders of the Grave, and to the Confines of Eternity. And

let

let me further tell you that have no love to Chriſt, that although Chriſt, whileſt you are ſuch, will never manifeſt himſelf unto you in a way of Love, yet there is a Day coming when he will Manifeſt himſelf unto you, but this Manifeſtation will be with a Vengeance, it will be in a way of moſt Furious anger; I mean, at the laſt day of Judgement, when Chriſt will be revealed from Heaven, not only to thoſe that Love him, but alſo to thoſe that Hate him, for every eye ſhall then ſee him, and he will come in flaming Fire to take Vengeance upon you that have not obeyed this Goſpel Precept, to Love him. The Conſideration of this ſhould awaken you to fear and fly from ſin, which otherwiſe will be your ruine and eternal Perdition. And O that withall you would be perſwaded to apply your ſelves unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by Faith, that you may hereby have Intereſt in him, and in that great Salvation which he hath purchaſed for you, and which in the Goſpel is freely tendred unto you: and this Faith in Chriſt would work Love to Chriſt, and put you in a capacity of theſe Manifeſtations of Chriſts Love unto your Souls.

SECT.

SECTION VII.

Uſe 2. THe ſecond Uſe concerneth ſuch of you as have ſome Love unto Chriſt, but are without theſe Manifeſtations. And there are two ſorts of ſuch: 1. Some of you never had theſe Manifeſtations. 2. Some of you have had theſe Manifeſtations, but have loſt them.

1. Some of you never had theſe Manifeſtations of Chriſts Love. It may be you are young and raw Chriſtians; a little while ago you were forward Scholars in the School of the Devil, and ſerved divers luſts with all your might and ſtrength; the Lord hath lately hedg'd up your way with thorns, hath opened your eyes to ſee your ſins, and made you ſenſible of your danger, but as yet your eyes are not open as to any comfortable ſight of your Saviour. Indeed Chriſt hath been revealed unto you as able and willing to ſave you, and you have been drawn by the Word and Spirit to take hold on him, and to give up your ſelves unto him; but as yet you are in the dark as to your Spiritual Eſtate, you are under doubts and fears of unſoundneſs and rotten-

rottenneſs at heart, that you are Hypocrites, and ſhall fall away, as other Profeſſors like your ſelves have done; you fear you ſhall one day periſh by the hand of *Saul*, that the Devil and your own Luſts will be too hard for you, and prevail ſo far with you, as to pull you back into wayes of Sin, and thereby to pull you down into the bottomleſs Pit of Hell. This cauſeth a dread upon your Spirits, and fearful apprehenſions of Gods wrath and future Vengeance; this fetcheth many a ſad and heavy ſigh from your breaſts, many a briniſh tear from your eyes, you are troubled, bowed down greatly, and go mourning all the day: Yet you are reſolved to give your attendance ſtill unto Ordinances, and there to wait upon the Lord, and for the Lord; you are reſolved, notwithſtanding all diſcouragements, that you will be the Lords, though you know not whether he be yours; you are reſolved that Chriſt ſhall have your hearts, and you will venture your Souls upon him, though you know not whether you are accepted by him. This may be a Uſe of Encouragement unto you: Certainly you are ſuch as love Chriſt, and are beloved by Chriſt, and Chriſt will manifeſt himſelf unto ſuch as have ſuch Love;

Love; let me tell you, that Chriſt is not far from you, whatever you may apprehend, though he be out of your ſight, yet you are not out of his, his eye is upon you, and his heart is towards you; he hears all your ſighs, he ſees all your tears, he pities you, and ſympathizeth with you in all your Griefs; he loves you, and e're long will let you know it; he is now preparing you for ſweet diſcoveries of himſelf, and e're long he will give you thoſe diſcoveries. If you follow on to ſeek him, he will certainly and may ſuddenly be found of you: And who knows but this may be the time of Chriſt's manifeſting his Love? It may be whileſt you are reading this Diſcourſe, you may have a glimpſe of his face, and hear his Voice ſaying unto you, *Be of good cheer, your ſins are forgiven you.* Liſt up the Hands that hang down, liſt up the Heart that is caſt down; Look up then dejected Soul, thy Saviour is before thee, open thine Eyes and look, look with the Eye of Faith, canſt thou not ſee a marvellous Beauty in his countenance? doſt thou not perceive ſome ſmiles in his Face, ſome Smiles upon thy Soul? Doſt thou not feel his Spirit ſweetly breathing upon thine heart, perſwading

ſwading thee, and giving thee a ſweet ſenſe of Chriſt's peculiar Love unto thee? Doſt thou not perceive ſome inward knockings at the door of thine heart, and hear ſome inward callings? *Open to me, and I will come in and ſup with thee.* This is the Voice of thy Beloved; make haſte and open to him, open all the Faculties of thy Soul, lift up the Everlaſting Gates to this King of Glory; ſend forth the Handmaids of thy Deſires to invite the Lord in, let thy Faith take hold on him and uſher him into thy Soul, and then embrace him in the Arms of thy deareſt Love, and give him ſuch entertainment that he may abide with thee for ever.

2. There are others of you have had ſome manifeſtations of Chriſt unto you formerly, but you have loſt them: your beloved hath withdrawn himſelf and is gone, you call and he giveth no anſwer, you ſeek him, but you cannot find him. Time hath been when your Lord was preſent, and gave you gracious viſits frequently, many a ſecret ſmile you have ſeen in his face, many a comfortable word you have had from his mouth, many a love-token you have received at his hand: Time hath been when you had your evi-

dences

dences written out fair and clean, with the Seal of the Spirit set unto them, and how exceedingly did you then rejoyce in the sense of Christs love! how did you feast your selves upon his rich entertainment of Gospel-priviledges, which through him you were invested withall! And O the admirings which then you had of free Grace! O the sweet meltings of heart in the kindly sense of sin! O the enlargements of desire which you had in your Prayers! O the burnings of Love to Christ which you have often felt in your bosoms! O the lively hopes which you had, and ineffable delight in hope of the glory of God! But now there is a strange decay within you of Grace, and alteration as if you were not the same men and women as you were before: you have withdrawn your selves from Christ, and he hath withdrawn himself from your souls; you have let down your watch, and the Devil hath got advantage against you by his devices, he hath watched his opportunity, and entangled you in the snares of some sins; whilst you have heedlesly gone to the utmost confines of Duty, and been upon the borders of sin, the Devil hath sent forth a squadron of temptations, not with fiery darts, but with silken cords, which have treated and parlyed with you, to entice and perswade to go a little further; they have told you what pleasant fruit doth

grow within thoſe borders, moſt ſweet and delicious to the taſte; that there are Silver and Gold Mines which you might quickly dig up, and find precious ſubſtance; that there you might have honour and eſteem, and what would you turn your back upon all theſe? would you be ſo nice and ſtrict as not to diſpenſe with a little duty? as not to ſtep over the hedge a little way, where the delights and advantage would be ſo great. And if you have heſitated, they have told you that it was very diſputable, whether the confines of Duty did not reach beyond the place which they would bring you unto, propounding the examples of others of the ſame religious Profeſſion, that have frequently gone ſo far, and why ſhould you ſcruple? or if it were a tranſgreſſion, it was but a little tranſgreſſion, they would not deſire you to go far, and who is there that lives, and doth not tranſgreſs thoſe bounds? and you might eaſily repent and find mercy, if God were offended; you might quickly retire and return into your former limits; then whilſt you have been parlying with temptations, the ſilken Cords have been faſtened about you, and e're you have been aware you have been drawn along, partly willing, and partly unwilling, and enticed unto ſome kind of ſins, and complyed with ſome kind

of

of lusts, indulging your selves to give them satisfaction, whereby you have been beguil'd and befool'd, whereby you have been secretly wounded, and inwardly defiled; and thus your evidences for Heaven have been miserably blotted, so that now you are not able to read them. Time hath been when worldly Affections seemed to be mortifyed within you, to be dead and buried; many a sore thrust and wound you had given unto them, and how did they bleed and faint, and grew so weak that they seemed to be giving up the Ghost; and you have thought surely they would never stir much in you any more. And then your love to Christ was strong and active, it did burn and flame within you, and O the zeal which you then had for your Masters honour, and you seemed to have no interest to carry on in the World, but the interest of Christ, and you minded not your own things upon your own account, but all your interests were swallowed up in the interest of Jesus Christ, which you chiefly minded and cared for, and made every thing else to truckle under it, and to be subservient unto it. But now your affections to Christ are strangely cooled; if there be the fire of love to Christ still within you, it is not fire in burning coals, or in a vehement flame, but it is a fire in a few scattered sparks,

and thoſe raked over, that they give neither light nor heat, and are hardly, if at all diſcernable by you; and your worldly affections, which ſeem'd to be dead, they have gotten ſpirit, and life, and vigour, and ſtrength. O the eager deſire which you have after the world, and the things in the world, and theſe accompanied with eager proſecution of the World; now the World hath your thoughts in contrivements about it, and the World hath your tongues in your moſt frequent diſcourſe of it, now the World hath your hand and your time, but that which is worſt of all, the World hath your heart too, the World hath juſtled Chriſt off his Throne, and for the preſent doth uſurp his ſeat. And is it then a wonder if your beloved be offended that you ſhould thus decline in your love, that your hearts ſhould go a whoring from him unto the Creature, in your giving thoſe affections unto any thing in the world which are his due? Hence it is that Chriſt hath ſhut up his countenance from you, or if he looks, it is with frowns upon you; you have loſt your firſt love, and you have loſt your firſt ſights, and your firſt taſts of the Love of Chriſt; now your ſpiritual joys and comforts are fled out of ſight, they are loſt and gone, and the bare remembrance of them only doth remain, and what-

whatever delights you have they are only ſuch as come in at the door of ſenſe, you have none at all that come in at the door of faith, and your ſenſual delights have expelled and baniſhed your ſpiritual. Now the rich Goſpel-priviledges have not that ſavour and ſweet reliſh with you as heretofore; your minding and ſavouring ſo much the Earth and Earthly things, hath diſreliſhed yout ſpiritual Appetite. O the miſchief which indulged ſin hath done unto you! O the unfelt wounds, but ſo much the more deep and dangerous, which ſin hath given you! O the defilements of ſin in your Conſciences, and the ſtains and blots which ſin hath caſt upon your profeſſion! O the havock which ſin hath made amongſt your graces, and amongſt your comforts! Leaves you have ſtill of an outward profeſſion, but where is your fruit to be found? if you have ſome fruit, is it not withered fruit, ſour, and ill-reliſhed, not ſuch ripe and mellow and ſweet fruit as heretofore in your flouriſhing eſtate? ſurely the Lord is at a great diſtance from ſuch of you: and are there not too many ſuch amongſt you? and what need have you to remember whence you are fallen, to ranſack your hearts, to find out your ſins, to humble your ſelves deeply, to repent, and grieve, and mourn, to

turn your laughter into weeping, and your joy into heavineſs, and to return unto the Lord ſpeedily, and do your firſt works, otherwiſe ſome fearful judgments are like to befall you, and the Lord may be even forced to awaken you with a vengeance, and make you a terrour unto your ſelves, and unto all about you. Don't provoke the Lord by your thus running away from him, to follow you with a ſtorm as he did *Jonas*, and to devour you in the floods and waves of dreadful afflictions, that hereby he may reduce and reſtore you, and keep you from being drowned in utter perdition and eternal deſtruction. It may be the Lord hath ſcourged ſome of you for your faults with the rods of ſome croſſes and diſappointments, ſome outward loſſes and troubles; it may be he hath put bitterneſs upon thoſe breaſts which you have been ſucking, and mingled gall in the cup of your pleaſures which you have been drinking; and you have begun to think of your evil ways, and ſeen what an evil thing and bitter it is to backſlide from the Lord; and you have thought it was beſt with you when you were neareſt unto Chriſt: it may be God hath dealt with you as he telleth his backſliding people he would do with them, *Hoſ.* 2. 6, 7. *Behold I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that ſhe ſhall not find her*

her paths: And she shall follow after her Lovers, but she shall not overtake them, and she shall seek them, but she shall not find them. Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now. And now you are seeking after your Beloved, but he hath withdrawn himself from you, and seems to take no notice of you; you call, and cry, and sigh, and weep, and lament, and complain, and seek, and wait, and yet he withholds from you all special discoveries of his Love. Possibly doubts may hence arise, and fears grow upon your spirits, and you are ready to sink, and sometimes are almost overwhelmed with inward trouble. Let this Doctrine be an encouragement to you still to seek diligently, and wait patiently, for the Lord will manifest himself again unto you in his own time, which is the best time. He may try you for a while whether you will follow him in the dark; he may suffer you to wait some time for him, who have made him to wait so long time for you: But if you persevere to seek him diligently in his ways, you shall find that it will not be in vain. And what would you say, ye backsliding Souls, if the Lord should manifest himself unto you at this time? would you not abuse his kindness, if he should discover his love to you again? would you

not grow wanton and carnally-ſecure? if he ſhould now renew your evidences, and give them fair written, and eaſy to be read by you, would you not blot them again by your ſins? if he ſhould now ſpeak peace unto your Conſciences, would you not again return unto folly? if he ſhould now reſtore unto you the joys of his Salvation, and ſend down the Holy Ghoſt from Heaven to come unto you, to be your Comforter, and to dwell with you, would you not grieve and quench the Spirit, and provoke him to another retirement, and more dreadful withdrawings than before? It may be the Lord will try you; it may be the Lord may draw near, and make ſome diſcovery of himſelf, and diſcovery of his Love unto you: It may be the Lord may look kindly now upon you, and ſecretly by his Spirit ſpeak kindly unto you: You are now looking, and longing, and hoping, and waiting, poſſibly this may be the time of your ſeeing his face, and the ſmiles that are there, of your feeling the ſweet ſheddings abroad of his love into your hearts by his Spirit, at leaſt he may give you a glimpſe, a glance, a little taſte, ſuch as ſhall raviſh your hearts. However, wait for him, and with earneſt deſires and importunate requeſts, plead with him for his returns, and theſe manifeſtations, and that in

ſuch

such kind of Language as this: *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, make haste O my Beloved, make haste to my soul, that thirsteth for thee as the parched land after the sweet showers that fall from Heaven, as the hunted Hart after the cooling and refreshing streams of the water-brooks. O when shall I drink of those waters of life which thou hast to give, who art the fountain and spring from whence they flow? when shall I taste again how good thou art? when shall I see thee again, and feed and feast my soul again with thy love? when Lord, O when wilt thou come unto me? wilt thou cast off for ever? wilt thou be favourable no more? hast thou in anger shut up thy bowels? shall this cloud alwayes sit upon thy brow? shall this curtain alwayes be drawn before thy face? Truth Lord, I have grievously sinned, and greatly offended thee; but have I not, do I not truly repent? is there any thing in the world so grievous unto me as the remembrance of my miscarriages? I acknowledg my offences, my folly and horrid ingratitude; but shall my sins be alwayes a wall of seperation between me and my beloved? are not thy bowels tender? are not thy mercies plentiful? is there not forgiveness with thee that thou may'st be feared, and the more dearly beloved? do'st thou not forgive freely without upbraiding? hast thou not promised to be found of all them that diligently*

ſeek thee? and didſt thou ever fail in thy word unto any? and ſhall I be the firſt? are not the deſires of my Soul after thee, and that chiefly, and that earneſtly? is there not dearth and drought in all things beneath thy ſelf, nothing that can give me ſatisfaction? have I not renounced the World for my portion? thou mighteſt ſend me to the World for help and comfort, to the world which I have over-earneſtly deſired and loved, and over-eagerly ſought for contentment and happineſs in; But is this thy wont and thy way, and the manner of thy dealing with them that are grieved for their ſin, and aſhamed of their folly? haſt thou not promiſed to manifeſt thy ſelf unto them that love thee? and do not I love thee? do'ſt not thou who knoweſt all things know that I love thee? though my love be imperfect, yet is it not true? though it be weak, yet is it not ſincere? elſe whence are theſe deſires after Thee above all Perſons and Things in the World? are not theſe the product of true Love? and wilt thou not make good thy Promiſe then, to manifeſt thy ſelf unto me! and if I had the manifeſtations of thy love, would not my love grow and encreaſe hereby? ſhould I not love thee more dearly and ſtrongly, if I had clear diſcoveries, and were perſwaded aſſuredly of thy love unto me? Truth Lord, I am altogether unworthy of ſuch a favour; but didſt thou ever beſtow this favour upon any

for

for their deserts? are not all thy gifts free? and am not I as capable as any of free grace? the more unworthy, the more I shall admire thee: the more is forgiven, I shall love thee more, and may I not now have a taste of thy loving-kindness? Hasten my beloved, O hasten unto me, and be as a Roe upon the Mountains of Spices! do not veil thy face from me any longer, do not conceal thy love, but now, O now draw near, and make me exceeding glad in the light of thy countenance, and in the beauty of thy face, and smiles thereof. Such desires and pleadings as these might prevail with the Lord forthwith to return again unto you, and to say, *Well Soul, I have heard thy prayer, thy breathing, and thy cry; thy pleadings have prevailed with me, and I am now come unto thee, and be it to thee according to thy desires; come soul, and look up, lift up thine eyes, and see; Here I am, behold me, behold me; this day I am come to bring glad tidings of great joy unto thee. I assure thee that I am thine, and all mine is thine, and thou art mine, and shalt be mine for ever.* And what words can sound so sweet, and yield such comfort, as these or such like, spoken by the Spirit unto the hearts of those from whom Christ is withdrawn?

SECT.

SECTION VIII.

Use 3. THe Third Uſe doth concern you that do love Chriſt, and have the manifeſtations of his love to your ſouls. Three things be exhorted unto. 1. Rejoyce in the Lord. 2. Admire his free Grace. 3. Labour to retain theſe Manifeſtations.

1. You that have the manifeſtations of the Love of Chriſt, Rejoyce in the Lord; of all perſons in the World you have moſt reaſon to rejoyce: you are the happieſt men and women alive. It is not wealth in the greateſt abundance which can make men happy: the richeſt Perſons have often thorns of the greateſt diſcontent to pierce their hearts, and ſtings of the greateſt guilt to wound their Conſciences: It is not the higheſt honour and worldly dignity which can make men happy; the vileſt men are often exalted, and thoſe that are in the higheſt places, are in the moſt ſlippery places, from whence they are ſoon caſt down into deſtruction, and whatever ſecurity they have in life, yet they are uſually conſumed utterly with terrors when grim death doth appear, and ſummon them to depart. It is not the ſweeteſt ſenſual delight that can make men happy: Vanity is the attendant,

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and vexation of Spirit is the consequent of all those pleasures that are sensual and sinful, which are the seed also of pain and everlasting torment. Such only can be said to be happy in truth, as are really united and related unto Jesus Christ, and through him reconciled unto God, and entituled unto the Kingdom of Heaven; but you are the most happy, and have reason to take the most comfort, who have not only relation unto Christ, but also the Manifestations of him; who know that Christ is yours, and you are his, that Christ loveth you, and that his Love, as it had no beginning, so it is without changing, and will know no ending. If you know that Christ loveth you, you have reason to rejoyce, because hereby you may know assuredly that you are elected, that God by an eternal and unchangeable Decree hath chosen you, when he hath chosen so few of fallen Men, and none of the fallen Angels, and when there was not the least foreseen Motive to induce him hereunto; the assurance of this may yield unexpressible sweetness unto you. If you know that Christ loveth you, you may know assuredly your effectual Calling, Conversion, and wonderful Union unto Christ; and O what matter of Joy is it to think how God hath called you out of darkness into his marvel-

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lous light! how he hath delivered you out of the Snare of the Devil, and the bonds of your own Luſts, and ſet your Souls at liberty! how he hath wrought a Miracle in your firſt Reſurrection from the Grave and ſpiritual Death of Sin, and put forth the ſame power in your New Creations and change of your Natures, as in his firſt Creation of the World! how he hath diſſolved, and made a divorce between your hearts and your ſins, and ſo wonderfully United and eſpouſed you unto the Lord Jeſus, and by this Conjunction and Relation given you an intereſt in all the Priviledges which Chriſt hath Purchaſed. If you know that Chriſt doth love you, you may know aſſuredly that you are Juſtified through his Merits and Mediation; and O what matter of Joy is this, to think that all your ſins Original and Actual, are pardoned, that none can lay any ſin to your charge, becauſe God hath juſtified you! that there is none that ſhall condemn you, becauſe Chriſt hath loved you, and out of Love hath dyed for you, and is now making Interceſſion for you at the right hand of God, *Rom.* 8. 33, 34. to be acquitted from all guilt, and no more liable unto future wrath, than if you had never offended; and when you had no Righteouſneſs of your own, to be accepted as perfectly righteous in the

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sight of God, through the imputation of Christs perfect Righteousness? Who have reason to rejoyce, if you have not reason? If you know that Christ loveth you, you may assuredly say, that you are the Sons and Daughters of the Lord Almighty; and will you not rejoyce, when of Children of the Devil, Children of Disobedience, Children of Wrath, you are made the Children of God, the Glorious Jehovah, that is the supream Soveraign and King of the whole World, and when you have not an empty Name only, but are entituled to all the Priviledges of his Children? If you know that Christ doth love you, you may know assuredly that he will keep alive his Interest in you, preserve his Grace in your Hearts, and enable you to persevere in Faith and Holiness, notwithstanding all the alluring Temptations which you may meet withall in the World, notwithstanding all the Suggestions and oppositions of Sathan, and notwithstanding all the powerful workings of your remaining lusts and corruptions, all which do combine together, and use all their power and policy (which is great) to extirpate your Grace, to draw you unto sin, to entice or force you out of the ways of God; and O what matter of comfort is it, that the Lord Jesus who loveth you, hath un-

undertaken for you to keep you in his hand, and by his unseen but mighty power, to enable you to resist and overcome, to hold on in his ways, and hold out unto the end, so that you may triumph with the Apostle, and say as *Rom.* 8. 35, 37. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us.* And you may be perswaded as *Paul* was, and greatly rejoyce therein, that, as *v.* 38, 39. *Neither death nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other Creature shall be able to separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus your Lord.* If you know that Christ doth love you, you may know assuredly that your Prayers have audience with God, that whatever imperfections and sinful mixtures they have, yet that they are mingled with the sweet Incense of Christs Merits, through which they are perfumed and accepted; and what comfort is this, that whatever you ask of the Father in the name of your dear Lord Jesus, if it be for his glory and your good, he will certainly procure it for you. To conclude, If you know that Christ doth love

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you, you may know assuredly that you are Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven, and that as certainly as you are alive, you shall attain eternal felicity in the beatifical Vision and Fruition of your Lord; as certainly as you have the first Fruits, so certainly shall you have the Harvest; as certainly as you have the Earnest, so certainly shall you have the Inheritance; as certainly as you see Christ by Faith here, so certainly shall you have the beatifical Vision of his Person and glory in Heaven, and be made perfectly happy in the eternal and full enjoyment of him; O how should you then rejoyce in the Lord, rejoyce in his Person, rejoyce in his Love, rejoyce in his Benefits, rejoyce in what you have, and rejoyce in what you hope to have by him; rejoyce in what you see now, and feel now, and taste now; and rejoyce in the foresights and foretasts of your Happiness to come. *Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes, and again I say rejoyce.*

2. If you have manifestations of Christs Love unto you, Admire his Free Grace in these Manifestations; as *Joh.* 14. 22. When Christ had promised to manifest himself unto such as love him, *Judas* (not *Iscariot*, he was the Traitor, and had no true love to his Master, but *Judas* the Brother of *James*) saith to him, *Lord, how is it that thou*

thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf unto us, and not unto the World? This Queſtion is not a Queſtion of Enquiry concerning the Way and Manner how Chriſt would manifeſt himſelf unto them, but it is a Queſtion of Admiration concerning the Thing; Τί γέγονεν ὅτι ἡμῖν μέλλεις ἐμφανίζειν σεαυτὸν. What is done, or What is come to paſs? How is it? or Whence is it? His Queſtion did not expect an Anſwer, neither do we find any to it, but only expreſſed his Wonder that Chriſt ſhould manifeſt himſelf unto them. And how ſhould you wonder then that the Lord Jeſus ſhould manifeſt himſelf unto you! That the Lord Jeſus, whoſe Name is Wonderful, and hath ſo many Wonders in him, a perſon of ſo great Eminency and Excellency, who hath ſuch a Crown of Glory upon his Head, ſuch Robes of Glory upon his Back, and on the Veſture of his Garment and his Thigh a Name written, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*; that this moſt excellent Perſon ſhould manifeſt himſelf unto You, ſuch as You, when he conceals himſelf from the greateſt Princes of the Earth, who by their Intereſt, Authority and Influence might ſo highly promote his Glory, he ſhould manifeſt himſelf unto you, who for the moſt part are low and mean, poor and deſpi-

despised in the World; that when he hideth himself from most of the Wise and Prudent, and great Scholars in the World, who by their Parts and Learning might magnifie his Name, and spread his fame, he should manifest himself unto you, who for the most part are persons of mean parts and Education; that when Christ hideth himself from many Moralists, who have escaped the grosser Pollutions which are in the World, he should reveal and manifest himself unto you, some of whom before Conversion were notoriously guilty of most foul sins; that when Christ manifesteth himself unto so few, that you should be in the Number of those Few; how many wonders are here! That this Glorious Person should send down another Glorious Person, I mean the Holy Ghost, from Heaven (which is more than if he had sent down all the Glorious Angels which are in Heaven) to make this Discovery of himself unto you; That he should make use of the Foolishness of Preaching as a means to effect this great thing; that while a man of like passions and infirmities with your selves is opening and applying the Scriptures, the Lord by this means should unveil himself and open the treasures of his Love unto you; that your humble, fervent and believing prayers

ers here on Earth ſhould aſcend up to the throne of God that is in Heaven, and move the Lord Jeſus that is there to come down thence, though not in perſon, yet by his Spirit; that prayer ſhould open Heavens gate, and have ſuch a prevalency for this manifeſtation and diſcovery of Chriſt; though the beſt prayers of the beſt men are not without mixture of ſin: that whileſt you are ſitting at the Lords table, the Lord himſelf ſhould give you a viſit, and whilſt you are eating bread and wine at the Sacrament, he ſhould give you to ſee and feel and taſte himſelf and his Love by your ſpiritual ſenſes. It was wonderful humiliation in Chriſt that when he could have commanded the moſt ſtately Horſes, yea Lions, Elephants, or Unicorns, he ſhould ride to *Jeruſalem* upon an Aſs, and when Chriſt hath the Chariots of ſo many thouſand glorious Angels, which he could command and ride triumphantly in when he makes diſcovery of himſelf unto his people, that he ſhould make uſe of the Chariots of ſo mean Ordinances in the diſcovery of himſelf unto you; how many wonders are here! how ſhould you admire his wonderful Grace and Love, and ſay, *What is man that thou art thus mindful of him, or any of the ſons of men, that thou ſhouldſt*

ſhouldſt thus viſit them? what are we unworthy wretches? and why ſhouldſt thou manifeſt thy ſelf unto us? Even ſo, dear Jeſus, becauſe it ſeemed good in thy ſight. Eſpecially you have reaſon to wonder and admire at the manifeſtations which Chriſt hath given of himſelf and love to you, when you conſider the excellency of theſe manifeſtations and diſcoveries beyond all other diſcoveries. If you have ſeen the moſt rare works of Art and human Invention, the moſt curious Pictures, the moſt ſtately Edifices, or any other works of the moſt ingenious contrivement: If you have viewed the works of Nature which do far exceed thoſe of Art, the beautiful frame of the Heavens over your heads, and the glorious Luminaries of Sun, Moon, and Stars, in their wonderful light and motion; the Earth under your feet when it hath got on its beſt attire, when the fields are cloathed with graſs in the Spring, or enriched with corn in the Summer; If you have ſeen the moſt pleaſant Brooks and Streams, and Fountains of water, the moſt ſtately Groves with lofty and broad ſhadowing Trees; the moſt flouriſhing Orchards, moſt richly laden with variety of the moſt delicious fruit; the moſt delightful Gardens with

with variety of the choiceſt Flowers caſting forth the moſt fragrant ſmell; If you have ſeen all ſorts of Birds and Fowls in the Air, all ſorts of Beaſts on the Earth, all ſorts of Fiſh in the Sea; If you have ſeen the moſt goodly Men that ever were born; the faireſt Women, with the moſt ſparkling beauty: What is the ſight of all theſe things, and the moſt lovely objects that ever were viſible to the eye of the body? the ſight of all is but mean and contemptible, and not worthy to be named in compariſon with the ſight of the Lord Jeſus by the eye of the Soul. Whatever beauty and lovelineſs there is to be found in any or in all viſible Creatures, there is infinitely more beauty and lovelineſs in Jeſus Chriſt: all viſible beauty is but a ſhadow, in Chriſt there is ſubſtantial beauty; all viſible beauty is fading; like the flower that ſoon withereth, like the leaf that ſoon fadeth, but in Chriſt there is permanent beauty: all viſible beauty is inferiour and mean, yea deformity compared with Chriſts tranſcendent lovelineſs. There is no diſcovery to the eye of the mind comparable to the diſcovery of Chriſt unto the eye of Faith. The light of Nature in the greateſt improvement

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of it, is but a weak and dim light in comparison with the spiritual light of the knowledge of Christ. No light so clear and bright, no light so pure and sweet, as that which makes discovery of the Lord Jesus unto the Soul. This discovery of Christ doth dispell clouds from the Mind, and exhale lusts from the Heart; it doth brighten the Understanding and cleanse the Affections; it doth warm the Heart with love, and fill the Heart with comfort; it quiets the Conscience and purifies it; it gives a most sweet peace and tranquillity to the spirit, and withall brings in such spiritual joy, as is unspeakable and full of Glory. O how then should you admire the Riches of the Grace and kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ unto you! that he should give unto you this discovery of himself, when the discovery is so admirable, so excellent, so desirable, so useful, and which doth lift you up into a far higher degree of excellency, than the otherwise most accomplisht persons in the world, that are without this discovery.

3. To conclude, If you have these manifestations of Christ and his love unto you,

you, *labour to retain theſe manifeſtations.* In a word, take heed of indulging your ſelves in any ſins, which may provoke him to depart from you, and withdraw the ſweet and comfortable influences of his Spirit, and be diligent in the uſe of all means and ordinances, publick, private and ſecret, whereby you may maintain daily Communion and Fellowſhip with him.

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